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General Assembly

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Fifty-sixth session

76th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 5 December 2001, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Han Seung-soo ..... (Republic of Korea)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Gounaris (Greece), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 108 (*continued*)

Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family

Plenary meetings devoted to volunteering to mark the closing of the International Year of Volunteers

Report of the Secretary-General (A/56/288)

Draft resolution (A/56/L.27)

Mr. Kafando (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): The International Year of Volunteers, which has been celebrated this year and the closing of which is marked by this meeting, has given the international community the opportunity better to grasp the important role played by volunteers in shaping the future of humanity, and particularly in the socio-economic progress of developing countries. As an expression of human solidarity, volunteerism extends through the ages. The community spirit that was the strength of our traditional societies was based on nothing other than volunteerism.

Development in solidarity, from which many thinkers have sought to draw development models appropriate to Africa, has essentially been based on volunteerism — that is, helping others to develop in order to help oneself develop. In other words, this form of solidarity should be not merely encouraged; we have to go further by institutionalizing it. That is why we are deeply grateful to the countries and international organizations that have made it an instrument to help mankind flourish and to give the volunteer movement a soul.

In the face of distress, misery and suffering, volunteers, with their receptiveness, enthusiasm and courage, work tirelessly in the field to revive hope. Throughout the world, volunteers are playing an important and effective role in sustainable human development, in such fields as education, health, environment and so on. This movement of benevolence therefore deserves to be better known and appreciated than it currently is. That is why we must support it by promoting public awareness and by financing its activities, since such organizations operate mostly on the basis of voluntary contributions.

It is from that standpoint that we should welcome the seminar convened last October in Dakar on the promotion of volunteerism and sustainable human development in French-speaking Africa. That meeting focused on the results obtained in terms of the targets set for the International Year of Volunteers, the recognition, facilitation, networking and promotion of volunteering. The seminar also recommended that all

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local initiatives registered this year be supported and enhanced by an international coalition of representatives of Governments, international and regional organizations, non-governmental organizations, foundations and the private sector in coordination with the United Nations Volunteers programme.

In Burkina Faso, volunteers have been working in almost every sector of economic and social activity, particularly in rural areas, along with the local populations whom they assist in combating poverty. While experiencing the harsh daily realities of the people, volunteers contribute their experience in undertaking many development operations, be it in the fight against desertification, in education, in the struggle against endemic disease or other spheres.

The volunteers who are thus participating in the human development of Burkina Faso come from non-governmental organizations, community organizations, civil society and a range of bilateral and international volunteer organizations such as the United States Peace Corps, the European Volunteers for Development, the Canadian volunteers organization, the German Development Service, the Italian volunteers organization, the Japanese volunteers organization, the Volontaires français du progrès and the United Nations Volunteers. I take this opportunity to reiterate our great appreciation for their wonderful work in Burkina Faso, and to thank them deeply.

The range of these volunteers is a clear reflection of the concern — even the preference — felt for my country. That explains why Burkina Faso wished to mark the International Year of Volunteers by establishing a national study and organizing committee, working within a plan of action that draws on the cultural wealth of Burkina Faso and on its role as a social and cultural crossroads in order to create opportunities to recognize volunteer work, to create volunteer networks and to expand volunteerism, especially at the national level.

We expect the International Year of Volunteers to yield results that will enable the international community to grow ever more aware of the realities concerning all the facets of volunteerism with a view to providing better follow-up.

We reaffirm our wholehearted support for this type of humanitarian cooperation; that support is once again reflected in our sponsorship of draft resolution A/56/L.27, entitled "Recommendations on support for volunteering".

Mr. Heinbecker (Canada) (*spoke in French*): The tragic events of recent months have reminded us of the need for solidarity and cooperation among citizens and among States. They have also brought into sharp focus the tremendous generosity and devotion of thousands of individuals, not only here in this city but elsewhere in the world as well. These are the acts of selfless altruism which we are celebrating today as we gather to mark International Volunteer Day and the close of the International Year of Volunteers.

In November 1997, resolution 52/17, proclaiming 2001 the International Year of Volunteers, launched a host of activities demonstrating support for voluntarism, both within the United Nations family and on the part of numerous Governments and organizations. These myriad initiatives helped achieve the four goals of the International Year of Volunteers: enhanced recognition, facilitation, promotion and networking of volunteers.

(*spoke in English*)

Throughout the Year, the United Nations Volunteers programme, observing a tradition dating back more than 30 years, took the helm by supporting national committees, disseminating information on voluntarism, soliciting the participation of volunteers and seeking recognition for the work they perform all over the world. In particular, I would like to single out Sharon Capeling-Alakija, Executive Coordinator of the United Nations Volunteers programme, for her leadership. Canada is proud to call her one of our own.

To express our gratitude to the United Nations and to the United Nations Volunteers programme and its thousands of volunteers working in nearly 150 countries, earlier today Canada donated a commemorative sculpture which will find a home at United Nations Volunteers headquarters in Bonn. The sculpture symbolizes the enduring spirit of the International Year of Volunteers.

I would like to thank the Secretary-General, who in August submitted an exhaustive report to the General Assembly (A/56/288) highlighting the many different facets of volunteer work. The report underscores the contribution of voluntarism to social and economic development in developed and developing countries alike. It recognizes that

voluntarism must be seen as an important part of any strategy aimed at poverty reduction, sustainable development, health, disaster prevention and social integration, and in particular at overcoming social exclusion and discrimination.

In that regard, the draft resolution before us today in document A/56/L.27 is very much in keeping with the Secretary-General's report. Canada is proud to be among the sponsors, and is grateful to Japan and the Netherlands for their leadership in preparing the text of the draft resolution, as well as to the various members of the core group of countries for their own contributions. By adopting the draft resolution, the General Assembly will be expressing its appreciation to all those who devote their time, energy and talents to the welfare of others. There is no better way of caring.

In Canada, the International Year of Volunteers 2001 invited citizens, organizations and businesses to stand up and be counted. And they stood up; and they were counted. In 2000, just over 6.5 million Canadians gave of their time and talents, asking nothing in return. More than one quarter of all working-age Canadians volunteered. Those volunteers came from all different walks of life and segments of the Canadian population, but they were all rich in human spirit. In 2000, volunteers contributed an average of 162 hours each. In all, that translates into slightly more than one billion hours, or the equivalent of 549,000 full-time jobs.

This voluntarism took many different forms, such as accountants sitting on public committees, grandmothers babysitting toddlers, 10-year-olds visiting senior citizens, scout leaders organizing camps and activities for neighbourhood kids, retired teachers providing literacy education, people taking in their friends and relatives when calamities such as an Ottawa ice storm hit, office employees organizing a Christmas meal for the homeless, and so on.

A similarly long list of factors explains why volunteers give of their time, including solidarity with the less fortunate, the acquisition of skills, allegiance to a religion or community, and simple service to their own communities. Voluntarism is the most fundamental act of citizenship and philanthropy we can perform in our own societies and abroad.

In June 2000 the Government of Canada joined with the voluntary sector to launch the Voluntary Sector Initiative. The partnership has already borne fruit. It has helped small and large organizations across the country to recognize the achievements of volunteers. We have also produced a new national survey of giving, volunteering and participating, which will be the basis for policy research and policy making. The next survey, in 2003, will provide a further set of observations. And just today, the Prime Minister of Canada, Jean Chrétien, announced several key elements of the Voluntary Sector Initiative, the most important being an accord between the Government of Canada and the voluntary sector. That landmark accord, jointly developed and widely consulted upon across Canada, is built upon shared values, principles and commitments to guide a new relationship. It is an important step in the ongoing work to improve the quality of life in our own country and abroad, and it provides a foundation for the work of the Government and the voluntary sector in the future.

As a legacy of the International Year of Volunteers, the Prime Minister also announced the creation of the Canada Voluntarism Initiative to recognize, encourage and support volunteering in Canada. The goal of the initiative is to help people come together to strengthen communities and improve our quality of life through volunteering and other forms of civic participation. At the same time, funding was announced for the development of a Satellite Account of Non-profit Institutions and Volunteering within Statistics Canada's System of National Accounts. This Satellite Account will provide a picture of the contributions of the voluntary sector to the economy. We are working with other countries within the United Nations on a protocol that would permit international comparisons.

In Canada we are proud of the relationship we have enjoyed over the years with the voluntary sector. The Voluntary Sector Initiative is a recognition of the importance the Canadian Government attaches to the voluntary sector. Steps to stimulate this sector, to create the conditions favourable to its growth, not only help the direct beneficiaries of these good works but also reward those who practice them and, finally, enrich society as a whole.

Ms. Crowley (Australia): Australia has a long history of volunteers and volunteering, covering a wide variety of fields of work and human endeavour. We have been world leaders in some of these areas, and we have been willing partners, or active participants, with others in different areas. So it was from a rich base that

Australia participated in the International Year of Volunteers.

The year's activities were coordinated at the national level by the Department of Family and Community Services. Individual state governments also coordinated their own programmes of activities across Australia. The national programme included funding to community and voluntary sectors, sponsorship and partnerships, a communication strategy and research. The Australian programme was in keeping with the draft resolution on recommendations on support for volunteering, which the General Assembly is considering today. The draft resolution and its recommendations raise a number of very important points, and many of these have special resonance for Australia.

In the opening paragraphs, the document recognizes the importance and valuable contribution of traditional forms of mutual aid, self-help and civic participation to the economic and social development of communities. It further recognizes that volunteerism is an important part of strategies to reduce poverty and to provide health care, health services, disaster prevention and sustainable development.

In Australia, there is a long history of "pitching in and getting it done", whether that is fighting a bush fire, looking for a lost child in the bush or rushing in to help at the time of a disaster, like a cave-in at a work site or a mountain collapse in snow country. Australia also has a reputation for lending a hand overseas, especially when it is in an area of our expertise — for example, fighting fires — and Australians have gone to other countries very recently to do just that.

Australia has seen the creation of some international non-profit charitable organizations, like Apex and Meals on Wheels. It has an illustrious reputation in the area of charities — whether religious or other — and national and international non-governmental organizations, and thousands of Australians regularly give time to help in the work those organizations do.

There are a number of points in the question of volunteers that are very important and need to be a matter for ongoing consideration.

First, as recognized in the draft resolution, is the different level of male and female volunteers, in particular the high participation of women in the voluntary sector. This is based on a number of historical factors. Much of the essential work is known as "women's work" — nursing, caring, cooking, washing, reading, listening, bringing comfort and so on. Further, women have in the past not had the same opportunity to participate in the paid work force in the same numbers as men.

Secondly, precisely because they were at the coalface of life, women were often the first to see a need in the community and to try to do something about it, whether that was by starting Meals on Wheels, as was done in my own state of South Australia in 1953 by a woman, Doris Taylor, herself in a wheelchair; or by opening shelters for the protection of women against violence, which happened across the world at about the same time as women became politically active and discovered that they could effect change. This point is recognized in the draft resolution where it notes the "potential positive effect of volunteering on the empowerment of women". It is also important to note that there is a very long list of contributions by men through the voluntary sector. I am not here to cause a divide between men and women. The experience of recent weeks in this very city, and the work being done at ground zero and in the support systems to back that work, give powerful evidence of the fact that men are great volunteers too.

Thirdly, volunteers expand the work of government, especially in bringing services to people and through the work of other services — for example, by raising money for all sorts of good works, from research to playground equipment. This is done through partnership arrangements, as reflected in the United Nations approach to the International Year, and in the draft resolution we consider today. Partnerships were also a key element of the Australian Government's response to the Year, which included establishing partnerships with both the public and private sectors to provide a national conference and environmental projects, among others.

The draft resolution refers to another point of great importance, and that is that volunteers must not be used to replace paid employment. As history shows, there is a tradition of need being discovered and then met by the voluntary sector in the first instance, then being taken over by paid workers. A very good example of this is teaching, now largely in the hands of paid laypeople, whereas before, many children were taught by religious orders at little to no cost to the

community. It is important that the temptation to reverse that tradition be resisted. What is necessary is to support and encourage volunteers as a vital part of our communities, especially encouraging the opportunity for people to put back a little bit into their own community.

Adequate recognition will perpetuate the place of volunteers in our communities and encourage them to continue their efforts. In acknowledgement of this, the Australian Government included a communications programme in its activities, and the United Nations also promoted the concept of recognition as one vital element of the Year. It is fitting, therefore, that one of the recommendations we will adopt today encourages the media to participate in public awareness and the promotion of volunteers.

While promoting volunteers, our communities very often overlook the great generosity of our young people, sometimes described as "the selfish generation". Those very same young people spend their summers in camps helping children, including those with disability; they journey overseas to live very modestly in aid projects and lend their efforts to help those communities. Young people are full of energy and keen to find places and projects that allow them to give something back to their world. We must ensure that their contributions are recognized and encouraged. It is important that the altruism of youth not go to waste.

The draft resolution recognizes the need to promote volunteering and the values that go with it. There is also a need to recognize just how much work is done by volunteers and how much our communities depend on them. Such recognition reinforces the necessity of providing support for such workers, whether that support is through training, subsidies to organizations or, for example, travel costs.

It also reinforces the necessity for communities to reappraise this work from time to time, to be sure that volunteers are not doing what should properly be done in the paid work sector, either public or private. Volunteering has become associated with different activities over time, and indeed, it is still evolving. As the draft resolution states, there is not one universal model of best practice. What works well in one country may not work at all in another.

The approach taken by the Australian Government, and reflected in the recommendations we will adopt today, has been to create an enabling environment to allow volunteering to develop and flourish and to continue to add value to our communities. It is an approach that has been recognized throughout the United Nations Year and will be endorsed again in the resolution we will adopt today. The United Nations itself provides a model example of an enabling environment, through the United Nations Volunteers programme.

In managing the valuable resource and contribution of volunteers, whether in any one country or internationally, the challenge is to get the balance right. The great generosity of people ought to be fostered, encouraged and appreciated. At the same time, those very qualities of generosity and coping in the face of awful hardship ought not to be abused or exploited. Volunteers must be a part of the programme, working in partnership with the public and private sector for a better world.

Mrs. Rivero (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): Uruguay wishes to join in the celebration of this day that marks the end of the International Year of Volunteers and the simultaneous beginning of a new phase in the development of volunteerism, which we hope will be even more beneficial than it has been thus far. In particular, we wish to express appreciation for the work carried out by the United Nations Volunteers, whose effective assistance and advice were available before and during the current year. In addition, we wish to stress the usefulness of the Secretary-General's report contained in document A/56/288 and hope that its recommendations will continue to be implemented in future phases.

In Uruguay, there are approximately 5,000 active organizations composed of volunteers from groups of various ages and all economic and social sectors. They participate on a daily basis in various activities related to human development. Following what has been to a certain extent the traditional development of volunteerism, the work of volunteers in Uruguay arose also in connection with social action by non-governmental organizations, but in recent years the Government, aware of the important work and the great contribution that volunteers make, has been participating to an even greater extent in activities aimed at solving problems that concern both civil society and the public sphere.

Accordingly, the Government of Uruguay, sharing the very important objectives that gave rise to the proclamation of 2001 as the International Year of Volunteers, and wishing to make its own contribution with the recognition and promotion of the work of volunteers, declared, through national decree 364 of 5 December 2000 that all of the domestic activities and programmes carried out during that year were of national importance. Accordingly, close cooperation was established between the Institute of Communication and Development of Uruguay, which, appropriately, was designated by the United Nations Volunteers programme as a focal point and was responsible for setting up a national committee, and public agencies — for example, the Ministries of Labour, Social Security, Education and Culture, Sports and Youth, on the one hand, and various non-governmental organizations, on the other hand, which, from the very beginning of the preparations for the Year, worked tirelessly to jointly carry out the activities planned for this celebration.

For all of these reasons, Uruguay is very happy to have participated directly and intensively in the commemoration of this International Year of Volunteers and of having been able to provide to the youngest members of its society a wealth of experience which, once again, shows that we, the peoples united, can achieve everything we set out to achieve.

Mr. Adam (Israel): The International Year of Volunteers, which draws to a close today, is only the beginning of increased volunteerism in the future: it gave us all an opportunity to learn the importance of and the need for volunteers and raised our awareness of their importance.

Israel is pleased to join with other countries in sponsoring draft resolution A/56/L.27, entitled "Recommendations on support for volunteering". At this time, I would like to commend the work of the United Nations Volunteers on its preparations for this Year and for the special events that were held. I would also like to commend the United Nations Secretariat on the promotion of programmes and projects aimed at providing substantive content in this regard. Israel also would like to commend the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and other United Nations funds and programmes that placed cooperation with volunteers at the forefront of their efforts. In fact, all of this would not have been possible were it not for the 4,500 volunteers who worked around the clock, in difficult conditions and mostly in developing countries, coordinating the work of millions of volunteers around the world.

Israel is of the view that United Nations peacekeeping operations should enhance cooperation with the United Nations Volunteers, with a view towards increasing the number of volunteers working in the framework of peacekeeping operations, both in their civilian projects, be it in assisting in elections or capacity-building, or in the context of peace-building and preventive actions in areas of tension.

Israel is proud to have been a part of the International Year of Volunteers. Indeed, the whole notion of volunteerism is one that touches profoundly on Jewish values of charity and concern for one's neighbour. The concept of Tikkun Olam — literally "to fix the world", but more commonly understood as social justice — is an idea that has been central to Jewish people for centuries and that inspires untold acts of charity and kindness in countless Jewish communities around the world. These values have been integral not only to the Jewish people, but also to the State of Israel since its inception.

As is noted in our information kit, which was prepared for today's event and which can be found in the back of the Hall, the institutions on which the State of Israel was established were primarily volunteer organizations, including Israel's pre-State school system, the Hagannah (the precursor to the Israel Defence Forces), and the kibbutz movement, whose collective spirit and voluntary communal effort is a model to the world. It is the spirit of giving oneself for the sake of others that was vital to the early development, and the continued strength, of the State of Israel.

With the establishment of our State in 1948, many of the services that were once performed by volunteer organizations were taken over by the Government, and the focus of those organizations began to shift towards more social welfare-oriented activities. Volunteers were at the forefront of national efforts to assist in the absorption of hundreds of thousands of immigrants, many of them refugees from Nazi Germany, who suffered from severe emotional and psychological wounds. Today, that spirit of helping newcomers and the disadvantaged continues to thrive in programs like Perach, which matches up university students with disadvantaged children, and through the

numerous immigrant assistance programmes that have sprouted up in the wake of massive influxes of immigrants from the former Soviet Union and Ethiopia.

The spirit of volunteerism extends far beyond just the immigrant sector. The overwhelming majority of Israelis today perform some form of national service after completing high school. For some, their service is in the armed forces. But many others do national service in other important ways, from working in hospitals and nursing homes and assisting in the development of towns and communities to serving as tutors and role models for disadvantaged youth. Today, 32 per cent of the adult population in Israel are volunteers of one kind or another.

Opportunities for volunteering abound in Israel. The list of Israeli volunteer organizations is quite long, but I would like to draw the Assembly's attention to three in particular. The first is Yad Sarah, "Sarah's hand", an organization established in 1976 to ease the plight of the sick, the disabled and the elderly by lending medical equipment free of charge and by providing transportation and other medical services. More than 6,000 volunteers serve approximately 250,000 Israelis each year through Yad Sarah.

The second is Magen David Adom, Israel's equivalent of the Red Cross or the Red Crescent, which dates back to 1930. Approximately 6,000 people volunteer every day to help provide emergency first aid, operate blood banks and provide critical medical services.

The third organization is Hessed Shel Emmet, or, in English, "true kindness". This organization of 550 volunteers assists police in rescue operations after terrorist attacks and natural disasters by performing the unique task of collecting body parts and informing next of kin. This organization was recognized by the magazine *Colours*, a publication that is jointly produced by the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) as part of the campaign to raise awareness of volunteering.

Indeed, volunteerism is very much a part of the Israeli ethic and is rooted in the words of the ancient Jewish sage known as Hillel, who said, "If I am only for myself, what kind of person am I?"

It is my delegation's sincere hope that the International Year of Volunteers will serve as inspiration for people all over the world to embrace the reality that no one is alone on this Earth, and that our actions, for good or bad, affect our communities, our countries and the whole world. We believe that the United Nations Year of Volunteers should be merely a starting point that will strengthen the role of volunteerism in the work of the world Organization and its subsidiary bodies.

We are hopeful that through this year's renewal of the spirit of volunteerism, individuals and societies the world over will be inspired to give a small piece of themselves for the betterment of all of humanity.

Mr. Lee Ho-jin (Republic of Korea): First of all, my delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report in document A/56/288 on the contribution of volunteerism as well as on ways Governments and the United Nations system can further support it. We also appreciate the efforts of the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) and its Executive Coordinator, who have been central in making 2001, the United Nations International Year of Volunteers (IYV), very fruitful. Furthermore, the initiative of the Governments of Japan and the Netherlands to adopt the relevant General Assembly and Commission for Social Development resolutions over the past years deserve particular recognition.

At the opening ceremony of IYV 2001, held at United Nations Headquarters in November 2000, the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, remarked "At the heart of volunteerism are the ideals of service and solidarity and the belief that together we can make the world better. In that sense, we can say that volunteerism is the ultimate expression of what the United Nations is all about." In this regard, the launching of IYV 2001 could be considered a new beginning for all of our common endeavours to make this a better world.

The strength of volunteerism is a key measure of how healthy and giving a society is. Volunteers share not only difficult tasks that have to be accomplished but also, and perhaps more importantly, the sense of giving and togetherness that strengthens the social fabric. They exemplify the noblest form of the human spirit in times of crisis and challenge. The point was powerfully brought home by the spontaneous outpouring of volunteers to help out in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of 11 September. It is only appropriate that we take this day to honour and remember all the volunteers working in many corners

of the world, in many cases risking their own lives and well-being in situations of natural disasters and armed conflict. Their safety and unhindered access to the people they aim to serve should be ensured.

In the course of IYV 2001, 123 national, 75 state and six city IYV committees representing civil society, government, academia and the news media have been working together to promote, facilitate and establish networks for volunteer activities worldwide. The collaboration should continue and further expand, even beyond the year of IYV 2001.

The Government of the Republic of Korea is firmly committed to promoting volunteerism in society. Since the Korean IYV National Committee was launched in July last year, several initiatives have been advanced, such as the opening of the IYV 2001 Korean web site, a comprehensive survey of public perceptions regarding volunteerism, a national IYV conference and a torch relay to link up a nationwide network of volunteer programmes. Currently, we are in the process of enacting a law that will strengthen administrative and financial support to volunteer activities.

The activities are wholly in line with the importance we place on international volunteerism. We have been contributing to the Republic of Korea-UNV Trust Fund since 1986, as well as dispatching an increasing number of Korean volunteers to take part in various UNV activities. Korean overseas volunteers are also being trained and sent to many countries by the Korean International Cooperation Agency (KOICA). Next year in September, the seventeenth biennial world conference on volunteerism, organized by the International Association for Volunteer Effort (IAVE), is to be held in Seoul under the theme "Volunteering: the power of civil society — a bridge to reconciliation and peace". We hope the conference will further strengthen the momentum to consolidate the spirit and work of volunteerism around the world.

The International Year of Volunteers, 2001 has greatly enhanced global public awareness of the importance of volunteerism. As the Secretary-General's report points out, there is an evolving paradigm that underscores the reciprocity in the benefits of volunteerism to everyone involved, as well as the social participation that voluntary action offers to the poor and other needy people in society.

The hardware for volunteerism is also changing. With the help of information technology, volunteer activities have extended to the Internet. Limited to offering on-the-scene services in the past, volunteers can now do their work at a distance as well. They help people in remote countries to disseminate their valuable experience and knowledge in agriculture, environmental protection, reforestation and health and medical care, while making the most of the existing networks in the fields. In the future, when video conference facilities become easily accessible to the public, online volunteering should greatly expand the social capital that can be utilized to help the needy sectors of society. In this context, we have great expectations for the Secretary-General's UNITeS initiative, as outlined in his millennium report.

As the representative of Japan said this morning, the Republic of Korea and Japan will be joining hands to co-host the 2002 World Cup soccer championship in June next year. My delegation is equally delighted by the opportunity to co-host that global celebration of the game of soccer. My Government is doing its very best to prepare for a most successful and enjoyable World Cup and will be relying upon the selfless services of countless volunteers to make it happen. Indeed, we expect the 2002 World Cup to be a milestone event for the promotion of volunteerism worldwide.

As the International Year of Volunteers comes to a close, the United Nations must gather, analyse and distribute the information and lessons learned so that volunteer activities can be further supported at the national, regional and international levels.

In the effort to strengthen and solidify volunteer activities, the United Nations Volunteers programme has been instrumental in organizing seminars and expert working groups, as well as in establishing the worldwide network of national committees and providing the committees with technical assistance. Hopefully, the experience has helped to lay the foundation for the national committees to function on a permanent basis.

Love of humanity and societal maturity require that we continue to encourage and rally behind the volunteer movement. The Government of the Republic of Korea is firmly committed to this noble cause.

Mr. Singhara Na Ayudhaya (Thailand): Allow me at the outset to express Thailand's appreciation to the United Nations and Member countries, whose initiatives and active participation have brought the cause and value of volunteerism and voluntary

activities to the fore. The International Year of Volunteers offers a rare opportunity for us all to give special recognition to volunteerism, especially to the organizations and to the people behind them. The International Year is an invitation to re-examine the ways in which society undervalues volunteering. It reflects the urgency of the need to salvage and revitalize the spirit of volunteerism.

In this connection, it is high time to re-examine policy orientation and strategies on volunteerism. Volunteering has had a crucial role to play, both in times of peace and of war. Volunteerism sensitizes institutions and, more than ever, could serve as a powerful tool to connect people and strengthen society towards democratization and good governance.

However, before volunteerism can be integrated into national strategies to overcome poverty and social exclusion and to enable a country to sustain political, economic and social development, it will have to handle the challenge of reviving social fabrics, the spirit of reciprocity, a stronger sense of mutual trust and social cohesiveness.

Voluntary work has been a way of life in Thailand since the agrarian society of olden days, when the process of rice farming — ranging from sowing, ploughing, reaping to grain refining — involved volunteer labour from nearby neighbourhoods. The culture of interdependency was well defined by the culture of the rice-growing society. However, at a time when globalization is at our doorstep, many fundamental and crucial agrarian values in society have gradually withered away. At this point in time, volunteering can assume diverse functions and help weave the loose fabrics back into one piece of tapestry. Volunteerism has become more relevant than ever to modern society in Thailand due to its functional and catalytic role in connecting people and in helping to overcome social exclusion.

In the present situation, in which resources for development seem to be more scarce than ever and countries are faced with many daunting challenges, the mobilization of community support through grass-roots volunteering is one of the most effective ways to fight poverty and to attain self-sufficiency. In its awareness of the value of volunteering, based on a great wealth of experience and contributions from a number of non-profit organizations and civil societies, Thailand has dedicated its efforts to supporting the work of volunteers.

On the legislative front, a more concrete way of supporting volunteer work in Thailand will be through the proposed law on social welfare, which seeks to facilitate the work of volunteers through the deregulation of rules and other restrictions that impede the operation of non-governmental organizations and, more significantly, through the provision of support for registered non-profit organizations whose work benefits the public. The Parliament and the National State Council are now considering the draft law. Also in the pipeline is a law to protect and support volunteers so as to provide more incentives for people to become volunteers. The public and private sectors will also be engaged in promoting the administrative management of volunteer work to ensure effectiveness and efficiency.

Pending the passage of such laws and in order to strengthen the network of civil societies, the Thai Government has facilitated the establishment of a national non-governmental organization coordinating centre for development and of provincial non-governmental organization coordinating centres on development in 75 provinces nationwide for currently 9 million volunteers in Thailand.

To demonstrate our commitment to supporting volunteer work, Thailand announced, on 21 October 2001, the Declaration on Thai Volunteers. Thai Volunteers Day is dedicated to commemorating the devotion of the late Princess Sri Nakarindra, the Princess Mother to His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand.

The Princess Mother was much revered as the "Mother of Social Welfare and Volunteering" because of her recognized long-standing service to vulnerable people in the remotest areas of Thailand. In 1954 she formed a group of volunteers comprising medical doctors and nurses in mobile units to provide medical services to those with little or no access to such services. The Foundation of the Volunteer Medical Team of the Princess Mother is still performing the same work today with a more advanced network in 50 provinces. Its work has helped improve the quality of life of people in rural areas.

In the context of achieving social development for all in a globalizing world, Thailand has identified the marginalized groups who live in dire poverty and

urgently need a social assistance programme as a first priority. A decentralization of power has also been put in place to ensure that local administrations and populations take charge of their own natural resources and budgets, including in the areas of public facilities and infrastructure. However, the financial crisis of 1997 and the imminent global economic downturn today, coupled with the many adverse effects of disparity of economic development, have increased the number of people living in poverty in Thailand to more than 10 million in 2001.

It seems that although we have travelled very far, there remains a long and arduous road ahead of us. We believe that by strengthening society at the grass-roots level, including through volunteerism, we would be in a better position to address the shortcomings of economic development and to revitalize society. Volunteers are a valuable asset of our society with a great wealth of experience and skills to contribute to the efforts of the government sector.

Although today marks the end of the International Year of Volunteers, 2001, the spirit of volunteerism will live on in our hearts. For its part, Thailand would like to join the other members of the international community in making volunteerism a culture of our globalized world.

Ms. van Glaanenweygel (Suriname): Having been involved in the preparatory process for the International Year of Volunteers, the Surinamese delegation is honoured and privileged to address the General Assembly today, on the occasion of the International Day of Volunteers and the closing of the International Year of Volunteers, 2001. It is an even greater honour that this is the first time in history that the General Assembly has devoted two meetings to the significance of the work of volunteers for the development of peoples and countries.

The Surinamese delegation attaches great importance to the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Support for volunteering". We thank the Secretary-General, in particular, for the view expressed in resolution 39/2 of the report of the Commission for Social Development (E/2001/26), as cited in part I of document A/56/288:

> "Volunteerism is an important component of any strategy aimed at poverty reduction, sustainable development and social integration, in particular overcoming social exclusion and discrimination."

Therefore, we support and sponsor the draft resolution of Japan and the Netherlands entitled "Recommendations on support for volunteering".

In Suriname, as part of our upbringing, we are taught from a young age to help one another. Volunteerism is thus part of our culture and considered to be very important. The National Committee on the International Year of Volunteers was therefore invited to discuss the issue and the actions being undertaken by the Committee with the President of the Republic of Suriname. The installation of our National Committee on the International Year of Volunteers was preceded by consultations with national volunteer organizations.

On 5 December 2000 the National Committee officially launched the International Year of Volunteers by holding a one-day workshop with the theme "Volunteerism for a Caring Society", at which our First Lady, who is a very active volunteer, and various international guests were present. These international guests also participated in the Model United Nations Assembly, organized by the United Nations Association Suriname on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Republic of Suriname's membership in the United Nations, on 4 December 2000.

The following groups and organizations participated in the International Year of Volunteers Suriname (IYV Suriname): youth, the elderly, women, men, the disabled, the Red Cross, the private sector, trade unions, service clubs, environmental organizations, the United Nations Association, human rights organizations and the Surinamese Government. To promote volunteerism in Suriname, various activities were organized, including radio programmes and a marathon, which was entitled Volunteerism, a Worthy Cause. IYV Suriname also started a volunteer centre as a sound basis for future activities.

Volunteers and volunteer organizations offer a great contribution to the development of my country. Our Government therefore greatly values the true partnership between governmental and non-governmental organizations. The National Committee on the International Year of Volunteers in Suriname will officially close the International Year of Volunteers in Paramaribo this evening with a special ceremony in which certificates of appreciation will be

awarded to various volunteers who have offered their services to their fellow human beings and society.

This morning's special closing meeting on the International Year of Volunteers has meant a lot to us. We congratulate the speakers on their statements and artists on their performance, and thank them all for their valuable contributions. It is true that volunteerism makes a difference in our daily lives.

We also thank IYV Suriname and all Surinamese volunteers for their efforts and contributions. In addition, we thank United Nations Volunteers for all the work it does in Suriname and for supporting our National Committee on the International Year of Volunteers. The United Nations Volunteers have been crucial in promoting the Year.

Finally, we thank the Secretary-General for his dedication and work on volunteerism. Indeed, a better, safer world for all needs volunteerism.

The Acting President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 49/2 of 19 October 1994, I now call on the observer for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Ms. DeKuyper (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies): Before beginning my official remarks this afternoon, I would like to take a moment to make a personal comment.

About 50 years ago, I went on my first school field trip and came across the Hudson River from New Jersey to the United Nations, a fledgling organization. I sat in the visitors' gallery and watched the debate. I am sorry that I cannot remember what the subject matter was, but it seemed so very important and I am sure it was. I wondered how the obviously very important people got to speak and, in truth, I was awed by it all.

Today, I am still in part that little girl and I still am in awe of being in these halls. And look — I am up here, speaking to the General Assembly as a volunteer on a subject to which I have dedicated my life: volunteerism.

In 1862, after witnessing the horrendous human suffering on the battlefield in Solferino, Mr. Henry Dunant put forward the following idea in his book, *A Memory of Solferino*:

> "Would it not be possible ... to form relief societies for the purpose of having care given to the wounded in wartime by zealous, devoted and thoroughly qualified volunteers?"

Today, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement comprises 178 National Societies in countries spanning the world in a global, humanitarian network involving 97 million members and volunteers. That is a unique example of the force that can be created when you pair a vision of humanitarianism with the dedication of volunteers.

We all recognize that volunteers are the people who choose to give of their time, of their energy or of their knowledge to show solidarity with their fellow human beings. They are the countless people who reach out and support others, sometimes in response to great disasters, natural or man-made; sometimes in response to needs arising from an armed conflict or in response to unimaginable crimes, as we witnessed here in New York on 11 September.

Always, they are present in less visible situations in their communities and neighbourhoods, where they carry out myriad small tasks that, taken together, constitute a great work. On behalf of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), I honour them and I thank them from the bottom of my heart.

It is therefore a great honour for the IFRC to address this important meeting today on the day that brings the International Year of Volunteers, 2001 to a close. We would like to take the opportunity to give voice not only to our own movement, but also to the many other volunteer organizations all over the world. Every organization is different in pursuing its different missions, but uniting in one common denominator: volunteerism. These organizations are created by volunteers and, once created, they constitute a force to mobilize even more volunteers in the service of others.

The IFRC views the International Year of Volunteers as a success that will have an impact for years to come. As an international organization, we have joined with United Nations Volunteers in promoting the ideals of the Year. The success of this year and of our cooperation with United Nations Volunteers has increased the knowledge of volunteerism and raised it to a more visible platform. As a result, volunteering is better understood and appreciated.

This has an enormous impact on the value and work of volunteering. Governments have seen that their actions can have an impact on volunteering and that they have a responsibility to look at ways in which they can promote and facilitate volunteering. Through the promotion and networking of this Year, organizations have been inspired to improve their systems of management of and reward and recognition for volunteers and have come to better understand how to involve volunteers more effectively.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies has paid particular and careful attention to using the opportunities available to it to promote and strengthen social development issues, particularly those relevant to the most vulnerable people in communities. We have sought during 2001, the International Year of Volunteers, to integrate the activities of the International Year with other programmes relevant to the vulnerable, especially vulnerable children, youth and older persons.

Our National Societies are volunteer organizations established in accordance with a country's situation, traditions and needs, while at the same time adhering to our commonly held seven fundamental principles, one of which is voluntary service. The principle states that the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire of gain. The Societies mobilize members and volunteers at the national level to reach out and deliver local services. Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers are local people helping other local people. Under the umbrella of the IFRC, these National Societies are united to form a strong international network capable of reaching out at the global, national and community levels to serve the most vulnerable communities across the planet.

Volunteer organizations cannot succeed alone. They need the support and cooperation of their Governments in order to develop in a volunteer-friendly environment. The way Governments, government agencies and politicians act regarding volunteering and voluntary organizations has a great impact on their viability and effectiveness. Governments can create enabling conditions for volunteering by promoting volunteerism and establishing a solid legal framework. Through dialogue with their volunteer organizations, Governments can successfully encourage a friendly environment for volunteering, which grows out of the local culture and conditions.

The International Federation has worked throughout this year to create a basis for this dialogue. We were delighted that the Inter-Parliamentary Union, at its 105th Statutory Conference in Havana in April 2000, adopted a decision encouraging Parliaments and the leading volunteer organizations in their countries to open dialogue on measures that might be taken to improve volunteerism. A number of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies have already opened that dialogue and more will do so in the years ahead.

The International Federation would like to express its appreciation to the States Members of the United Nations for designating this year the International Year of Volunteers. For us, the International Year is the beginning of a new approach to volunteerism, especially with respect to contacts with Governments and entities beyond the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement, and we are looking forward to fruitful dialogue and cooperation with all the United Nations Member States in the future.

Five days from now, Secretary-General Kofi Annan and the United Nations will be presented with the well-deserved Nobel Peace Prize. Let me, on behalf of the International Federation of Red Cross Red Crescent Societies, congratulate Mr. Han Seung-soo and Mr. Annan and allow me at the same time to remind us all that the very first Nobel Peace Prize was given 100 years ago to an outstanding volunteer, Mr. Henry Dunant, who lived his life as a humble person dedicated to the cause of relieving human suffering. His vision inspired the millions and millions of people who today constitute the power of humanity and who, as volunteers, serve their fellow human beings across the world.

The Acting President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 44/6 of 17 October 1989, I now call on the observer for the Council of Europe.

Mr. De Jonge (Council of Europe): It is an honour for me to address the General Assembly on International Volunteer Day. The Council of Europe has supported the United Nations International Year of Volunteers. This fits in perfectly well with the Council of Europe's overall concern to strengthen civil society as an expression of participatory democracy and to promote social cohesion.

Voluntary action involves learning, sharing and helping others, and it enables all citizens to play a part in the democratic process. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe therefore welcomed the United Nations initiative and called on the States members of the Council of Europe to adopt various incentive measures during the International Year of Volunteers at the national and the European level. To mark the beginning of the Year, the Parliamentary Assembly devoted a debate in January 2001 to the issue of improving the status and role of volunteers as a contribution by the Parliamentary Assembly to the International Year of Volunteers. A report on that item was submitted by the Parliamentary Assembly's Committee on Social, Health and Family Affairs, which has a long-standing tradition of supporting international voluntary service.

In a recommendation to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, based on that report, the Parliamentary Assembly called on States members of the organization, among other things, to eliminate from their laws and their practice all obstacles preventing people from engaging in voluntary action and to promote dynamic policies favouring such action. That text and the report were prepared in close cooperation with the European team of the United Nations Volunteers. The Parliamentary Assembly invited Governments to recognize the democratic, humanitarian, social, educational, training and economic value of voluntary action.

I might single out a few other proposals. The Parliamentary Assembly asked Governments to help, particularly by earmarking budgetary and other resources, to support and develop voluntary initiatives of value to the community. The Parliamentary Assembly also urged voluntary associations and volunteers themselves to respect the values and principles of democracy, human rights and the rule of law of the Council of Europe. Furthermore, the Parliamentary Assembly asked Governments to give voluntary workers legal status and adequate social protection, while respecting their independence and removing financial obstacles to volunteering.

For its part, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe drew up the European Convention on the Promotion of a Transnational Long-term Voluntary Service for Young People. The Convention is intended to be a tool to facilitate, promote and support transnational voluntary service for young people up to the age of 25. By its terms, young people should receive preparation and training for voluntary activities, as well as proper recognition. That instrument, which was opened for signature in May 2000, is also open to States not members of the Council of Europe. Furthermore, the Council of Europe has taken the initiative to draw up a code of ethics for young volunteers.

The United Nations International Year of Volunteers was a timely initiative, and it threw the spotlight on those Council of Europe initiatives. The contribution of the Council of Europe to the Year was aimed at favouring the development of a genuine culture of voluntary action necessarily extending to the Council of Europe itself as well as to its member States and to volunteers. However, our initiatives in support of the Year, and in particular the Parliamentary Assembly's recommendation and the Council of Europe Convention to which I just referred, could also be of interest and value to States not members of the Council of Europe and to other organizations.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/56/L.27, entitled "Recommendations on support for volunteering", as orally revised.

Before the Assembly proceeds to take action on the draft resolution, I should like to announce that since the introduction of the draft resolution the following countries have become sponsors of draft resolution A/56/L.27: Albania, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Congo, Ethiopia, Guinea, Haiti, Indonesia, Jamaica, Kenya, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, Paraguay, the Philippines, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia and Uruguay.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/56/L.27, as orally revised?

Draft resolution A/56/L.27, as orally revised, was adopted (resolution 56/38).

The Acting President: Before calling on those who wish to speak in explanation of position on the draft resolution just adopted, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote or position are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Al-Awdi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation wishes at the outset to thank the delegations of Japan and of the Netherlands for their efforts in preparing the draft resolution entitled "Recommendations on support for volunteering", which has just been adopted under agenda item 108. My delegation wants to affirm its support for that draft resolution, which was adopted by consensus, and to stress the importance we attach to the content of the text, which promotes volunteering.

Nevertheless, we want to draw the attention of Member States to the fact that, in our view, the resolution does not cover all areas related to volunteering, specifically the issue of the safety and security of volunteers in time of war or conflict. Volunteers in Kuwait made a great effort to help Kuwaiti civilians during the 1990 occupation of Kuwait. Important volunteer services included the provision of food, medicine and medical services to civilians, particularly women, children and the elderly, who were then under occupation. Those volunteers exposed themselves to danger owing to the military operations then under way.

My delegation thus believes it important that, in future consideration of this item, we should pay due attention to the issue of the safety and security of volunteers in time of war or conflict.

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 108.

The meeting rose at 4.30 p.m.

United Nations A/56/PV.77

General Assembly

Fifty-sixth session

Official Records

77th plenary meeting
Thursday, 6 December 2001, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Han Seung-soo ..... (Republic of Korea)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Kumalo (South Africa), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda item 21

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations

(a) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System

Report of the Secretary-General (A/56/171)

(b) Cooperation between the United Nations and the International Organization of la Francophonie

Report of the Secretary-General (A/56/390)

Draft resolution (A/56/L.34)

(c) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe

Report of the Secretary-General (A/56/302)

Draft resolution (A/56/L.31)

(d) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference

Report of the Secretary-General (A/56/398)

Draft resolution (A/56/L.36)

(e) Cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States

Report of the Secretary-General (A/56/474)

Draft resolution (A/56/L.26)

(f) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Reports of the Secretary-General (A/55/996, A/56/449)

Draft resolution (A/56/L.35)

(g) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Community of Central African States

Report of the Secretary-General (A/56/301)

Draft resolution (A/56/L.25/Rev.1)

(h) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization

Report of the Secretary-General (A/56/122)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

01-67938 (E)

Draft resolution (A/56/L.32)

(i) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

Report of the Secretary-General (A/56/125)

(j) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity

Report of the Secretary-General (A/56/489)

Draft resolution (A/56/L.37)

(k) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (A/56/317)

Draft resolution (A/56/L.38)

(l) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (A/56/490)

Draft resolution (A/56/L.30)

(m) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum

Draft resolution (A/56/L.29)

The Acting President: I give the floor to the Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, Mr. Wolfgang Hoffmann, to present the report of the Preparatory Commission.

Mr. Hoffmann (Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization): I am pleased to be here today to report on the activities of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO). The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), is one of the cornerstones of the international non-proliferation and disarmament regime. Its total ban of any nuclear test explosions in any environment will help end the development of ever more sophisticated nuclear weapons, and will arrest the proliferation of those weapons.

In view of the terrorist attacks of 11 September, the fight against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction has acquired a new urgency. As the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, put it in his opening address to the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT only three weeks ago,

> "Those events should have made it clear to everyone that we cannot afford further proliferation of nuclear weapons. Nor can we afford to lose momentum in efforts to eliminate nuclear weapons from the world's arsenals. We must do everything we can to reduce the risk of such weapons falling into the hands of terrorists." (*Press release SG/SM/8020, 11 November 2001*)

Since my first address to the General Assembly, on 30 October 2000, I am pleased to inform members that the Treaty has been signed by four additional States and has been ratified by a further 23, one of which was an Annex-2 State, that is one of the 44 States listed in the Treaty whose ratifications are required for entry into force. Today, the Treaty has been signed by a total of 164 States and ratified by 89. Thirty-one of these ratifications are by annex 2 States. The level and pace of signatures and ratifications indicate the firm support of the international community for the Treaty.

The Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization was established five years ago to carry out the necessary preparations for the effective implementation of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and to prepare for the first session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty. The Commission focuses its activities in two key areas: the establishment of the global verification regime to monitor Treaty compliance and the promotion of signature and ratification.

As of 1 December 2001, the Provisional Technical Secretariat comprises 266 staff members from 68 countries, with the percentage of women in the professional category having reached 27.9 per cent. Total budgetary resources approved for the financial years 1997-2002 amount to some $408 million. Most of these resources have been dedicated to verification-related activities; in 2000-2001, only 18.5 per cent of the total resources were allocated to administrative and other non-verification-related programmes.

A key activity of the Commission is the establishment of a global verification regime to monitor Treaty compliance. This regime needs to be operational at the Treaty's entry into force. It will be capable of detecting nuclear explosions underground, in water and in the atmosphere. The verification regime comprises four elements. First, the International Monitoring System (IMS), with the International Data Centre (IDC), will be able to detect evidence of possible nuclear explosions. Secondly, a consultation and clarification process can clarify and resolve matters concerning possible non-compliance with the Treaty. Thirdly, States parties will also have the right to request an on-site inspection to determine whether a nuclear-weapon test or any other nuclear explosion has been carried out in violation of the Treaty and to gather facts which might assist in identifying any possible violator. Lastly, confidence-building measures will contribute to resolving compliance concerns arising from possible misinterpretation of verification data and to assist in the calibration of IMS stations.

The International Monitoring System consists of 321 monitoring stations and 16 radionuclide laboratories that monitor the Earth for evidence of a nuclear explosion. The IMS uses seismic, hydroacoustic and infrasound monitoring technologies to detect possible nuclear explosions. Radionuclide monitoring technologies collect and analyse air samples for evidence of the physical products created by nuclear explosions. Progress in establishing these facilities has been good, considering the engineering challenges that face the establishment of this first worldwide monitoring network. Over 270 site surveys have been completed. Twenty-two of the primary seismic stations, 75 of the auxiliary seismic stations, 3 hydroacoustic stations, 12 infrasound stations and 17 radionuclide stations have been completed. These stations now substantially meet the specifications necessary for their certification as part of the IMS network.

A Global Communications Infrastructure (GCI) carries the seismic, hydroacoustic, infrasound and radionuclide data from IMS facilities to the International Data Centre. This global satellite communications network is also used to distribute data and reports relevant to Treaty verification to the States signatories. Transmitted data are authenticated against tampering. As of the end of October this year, some 65 IMS stations were linked to the GCI, some directly and some through one of seven independent sub-networks.

The International Data Centre supports the verification responsibilities of States signatories by providing the products and services needed for effective Treaty monitoring. The Centre receives raw data from monitoring stations around the world, which it processes, analyses and transmits to States for final analysis. Improved software is enhancing precision in locating the events which produce seismic, hydroacoustic, infrasound and radionuclide data, and the verification system as a whole is being continuously developed and refined.

On-site inspections, as provided for in the Treaty, are a final verification measure and the development of a draft on-site inspection operational manual is a key task for the Preparatory Commission. The Commission is also acquiring inspection equipment and building up a pool of potential inspectors.

The overarching aim of the Treaty is to contribute effectively to the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons in all its aspects and to enhance international peace and security. However, the infrastructure and technology used to collect, transmit, process and analyse verification data, together with the data themselves, could provide States with significant scientific and civil advantages. The verification regime provides a comprehensive set of information about the Earth's crust, seas and atmosphere. Seismic, hydroacoustic and infrasound data can be used in studies of the Earth's structure and for research on earthquakes, volcanic eruption forecasting, tsunami warnings, underwater event location and sea temperature and climate change monitoring. The data can assist in minimizing the effect of volcanic eruptions on civil aviation and can be used for oceanic swell research and atmospheric and meteorological studies. Radionuclide technologies offer opportunities

for detecting radionuclide dispersion, monitoring radiation levels and studying natural radioactivity, as well as supporting atmospheric studies, biological research and environmental change tracking.

The Preparatory Commission promotes information-sharing through international cooperation workshops and other activities designed to further Treaty understanding, such as the Experts Communication System, a password-protected web site which offers States-designated registered users effective and prompt access to internal discussions and documents of the Preparatory Commission. The States are also offered training courses and workshops in IMS, IDC and on-site inspection technologies, thereby assisting in the upgrading of their national scientific capabilities in related areas.

On 15 June 2000, the General Assembly adopted the Agreement to Regulate the Relationship between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, thereby accepting the Preparatory Commission as a new member of the United Nations family. The Commission remains an independent international organization, but has been given formal status by which we can contribute to the goals of the United Nations. CTBTO staff use the United Nations laissez-passer on duty travel. We have concluded a services agreement with the United Nations Development Programme, which provides us with operational support. Our Liaison Office, situated in the United Nations buildings across the street here in New York, contributes to the implementation of the relationship Agreement with the United Nations and liaises with the United Nations Secretariat and other agencies of the United Nations system, the offices of regional, intergovernmental or relevant non-governmental organizations, as well as with the delegations here in New York.

Under this Agreement, our links and interactions with the United Nations and its programmes, funds and specialized agencies are developing even further and options for enhanced cooperation and support are under review. In order to fully contribute to the work of the United Nations family, the CTBTO Preparatory Commission has requested full membership in the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) or the United Nations System's Chief Executives Board, as it became in October 2001. The Preparatory Commission already participates in the work of the high-level committees of the ACC, but this participation cannot replace full membership in the main coordinating body. In light of the disarmament-related issues in the Millennium Declaration, we feel it particularly important that the CTBTO Preparatory Commission be able to contribute fully to the work of the United Nations family.

We feel it is also important to report on our activities to the United Nations on a yearly basis. Fully aware of the wish of the General Assembly to rationalize its work, we believe that it would be of great significance for the General Assembly to be kept abreast of the rapid development of our new and growing organization on a closer basis. In times of increasing concern about the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the reports of organizations specialized in this field should be of particular relevance to the deliberations of the General Assembly.

In closing, I would like to emphasize that, five years after its opening for signature, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty has the confirmed support of the international community and is recognized as playing an important role in nuclear disarmament and in preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The developing verification regime is ever more accurate in pinpointing the location of events and, in addition, the data already available to States signatories, in both raw and processed forms, can have valuable civil and scientific uses. As was unanimously declared by the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which took place here at United Nations Headquarters just three weeks ago, we call upon all States to take steps to ensure that the CTBT enters into force as soon as possible. By signing and ratifying the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, States join a global community committed to ensuring that the world becomes a safer place for generations to come.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to present the report of the organization.

Mr. Bustani (Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons): This is the first occasion, since the adoption by the General Assembly and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Conference of the States Parties of the

Agreement concerning the Relationship between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, on which OPCW is officially reporting to this body on matters of particular relevance to the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). I am privileged, in my capacity as Director-General of the OPCW, to deliver this statement in fulfilment of this, hopefully, annual reporting requirement, to share my hopes and my concerns about the current state of affairs in relation to global chemical disarmament and non-proliferation, and to emphasize a number of issues — some brought to the forefront by recent developments — which call for prompt action by the international community.

This opportunity to address the General Assembly is particularly apposite against the backdrop of the monumental new challenges facing the world in its ongoing struggle against the evil of terrorism. The fabric of international security was torn apart by the cold-blooded murder of thousands of innocent civilians of many nationalities and religious beliefs on 11 September. The worst terrorist atrocity in modern history added an entirely new dimension to our concepts of security, which were largely based on the assumption that tensions and rivalries between States or groups of States are at the heart of the international order. In the three brief months which have elapsed since 11 September, many of these assumptions suddenly appear almost prehistoric. The new dangers and risks to international peace and security make it increasingly self-evident that only long-term approaches based on genuinely multilateral cooperative actions and solutions will eradicate the scourge of terrorism.

The extraordinary new challenge which confronts the international community does not lend itself to resolution by routine measures. The global fight against terror requires, in the words of President George W. Bush, the use of every resource at our command. And every such resource — national and international alike — needs to be used to its full potential. The most immediate burden falls on national and international law enforcement and intelligence agencies, on men and women in uniform, on diplomatic and financial communities and, above all, on world leaders. Yet global terrorist networks will be effectively challenged and defeated only through coordinated global efforts. The effective international coordination and sharing of information and activities of individual nation States logically require the active involvement of international organizations — first and foremost of the United Nations.

The Secretary-General stated, in a speech on 1 October, that

> "the greatest danger arises from a non-State group, or even an individual, acquiring and using a nuclear, biological or chemical weapon" (*A/56/PV.12, p. 3*)

Well, they have already acquired and used some of these weapons. Religious fanatics used a chemical warfare agent — sarin — to attack civilians in the Tokyo underground in 1995. The desire of Osama bin Laden to obtain weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons, is also a matter of public record. The recent anthrax attacks in the United States are not attributable to natural causes. Are terrorists likely to stop there? Certainly not; under certain circumstances, chemical weapons have the potential to inflict even more damage than biological weapons. Chemical weapons can kill almost instantaneously, leaving no time for antibiotics or cure. Chemical weapons attacks require an immediate and massive response and rescue effort. Chemical weapons leave behind contamination which is extremely difficult to eliminate. Our inspectors still wear full protective gear when inspecting some former chemical weapons production facilities that stopped producing chemical weapons 15 years ago or when inspecting chemical weapons abandoned over 50 years ago.

Is the world prepared to deal effectively with chemical terrorism if and when it is confronted with it? Do we really appreciate the full extent of this threat? If terrorist use of chemical weapons, including toxic chemicals, ceases to be a dimly perceived but proven threat and becomes a persistent reality, are we ready and able to respond quickly and effectively?

This aspect of the problem is of immediate relevance to the 143 States members of the OPCW — soon to be 145 with the recent addition of Nauru and Uganda. It is of immediate relevance to the mandate that they have assigned to the Chemical Weapons Convention. It is also of particular relevance to those States parties which lack both the specialized knowledge and the institutionalized resources that might help them to defend or to protect themselves against chemical weapons. The Secretary-General is convinced, and so am I, that there is much which the

international community can do to help prevent future terrorist acts from being carried out with weapons of mass destruction by strengthening the global norms against the use and the proliferation of such weapons.

The OPCW is not a police agency. It has neither the mandate nor the expertise to hunt down terrorists or to foil terrorist plots. However, it is an international agency mandated to verify compliance with specific international legal obligations. In the words of the Convention itself, all States parties are "determined for the sake of all mankind, to exclude completely the possibility of the use of chemical weapons". This means use by anyone — terrorists included — and anywhere. This firm commitment on the part of 145 countries around the world provides a sound political foundation for the unique and authoritative role to be played by the OPCW, which is, after all, the international community's designated repository of knowledge and expertise in the global struggle against all possible uses of chemical weapons, including toxic chemicals. Having received the Security Council's invitation, the OPCW is ready to extend its cooperation to the Counter-Terrorism Committee and to provide information or assistance in connection with matters arising under resolution 1373 (2001).

The Convention, in a legally binding manner, prohibits the nationals of States parties from engaging in acts — including chemical terrorism — that violate its provisions. Member States are under a solemn treaty obligation to enact national penal legislation to enable them to prosecute such individuals. Thus, the CWC establishes a truly global legal norm against chemical weapons and against all those, including terrorists, who may wish to violate that norm. The harbouring of terrorists who are in any way contemplating the development or use of chemical weapons is a crime that should be punishable by law on the territory of each of the 145 States parties to the Convention.

The Convention also requires the OPCW to provide assistance to each and any State party which may be threatened with chemical weapons or against which chemical weapons have been used by anyone. Contingency planning for such a possibility is already well under way but, frankly, much more needs to be done if we are to be able to respond in the manner envisaged by the Convention.

Finally, the organization's very raison d'être — the worldwide elimination of chemical weapons and the establishment and consolidation of a credible chemical weapons non-proliferation regime — will significantly lessen the probability that chemical weapons will be produced by or fall into the hands of terrorists.

The sooner the Convention achieves universality; the sooner all chemical weapons are destroyed; the sooner our chemical weapons non-proliferation regime is strengthened and consolidated; the sooner all States parties implement an effective legal regime, including penal legislation, to prevent the illegal use of chemicals and chemical technologies; the sooner the OPCW becomes fully equipped to provide timely and adequate assistance to those who might face the horror of chemical weapons attacks; the sooner will the threat of chemical terrorism be effectively contained and substantially reduced. In many of these areas, cooperation between the OPCW and the United Nations and other international organizations could contribute a good deal towards the achievement of our common objectives.

This brings me to what the OPCW has been able to achieve in all the aforementioned areas and also to what remains to be done. In many ways, the year 2000 was our most productive year to date. The year 2001 has, regrettably, been one of sacrifice and frustration.

One of the most inescapable issues of all is the need for universal membership of the organization. From 87 States parties at the entry into force of the CWC some four and a half years ago, the OPCW has now grown to 145 members. In that short period of time, we have achieved a result which took other multilateral arms control and disarmament regimes 20 years or more. The OPCW has undertaken wide-ranging efforts aimed at further increasing the membership of the CWC and is targeting its universality strategy at the rapidly diminishing areas of the world in which most of the current 50 non-member States are located.

The Chairman of the OPCW's Executive Council, Ambassador Abdel Halim Babu Fatih of Sudan, recently engaged in extensive and promising discussions on the margins of the new African Union summit in Lusaka, Zambia, with 16 foreign ministers from those countries on the African continent which have not yet joined the CWC. Earlier this year, with the assistance of Australia, New Zealand and the United Nations, the OPCW twice presented its case for

universality to the Pacific Forum countries. Last week, a regional seminar was held in Jamaica, primarily aimed at non-member States from Central America and the Caribbean, but also with the active participation and financial support of other regional actors. We need more of these cooperative efforts, bringing States parties and States not party together at the same table with a view to extending the reach of the Convention to the benefit of all.

There are, of course, other areas of the world in which the question of CWC membership, unfortunately, has become entangled, for a number of historical reasons, in a web of complicated and interconnected regional security problems. Security concerns, indeed, cannot and should not be taken lightly. This is why I believe it would be of utmost importance for OPCW member States to join me in engaging in and pursuing a constructive dialogue with the few States for which the question of whether or not to join the CWC goes beyond legislative priorities and has become complexly tied into the security dilemmas which they are facing.

The Chemical Weapons Convention is, after all, a voluntary alliance of sovereign nations and no one can, of course, be forced to join it. I am nevertheless convinced that it is possible for national security interests to be preserved through a variety of measures which will establish the level of confidence required for such outsiders to join the Chemical Weapons Convention. The steadily increasing membership of the Convention, even in those difficult regions, testifies to the validity of such an approach. Of course, States parties to the CWC, in particular those with considerable influence in such regions, should actively explore, along with us in the OPCW, all such measures which might enable a further expansion of the CWC's zone of responsibility.

We would also like to count on the support and cooperation of the United Nations in this respect. The collaborative dynamism of international developments since 11 September may well encourage those States that have not yet joined the Convention to see with starker clarity both the advantages of joining and the disadvantages of not doing so.

There has been significant progress towards the complete elimination of chemical weapons. All 8.6 million chemical weapons declared by the four declared chemical-weapons-possessing States parties have been meticulously inventoried by OPCW inspectors item by item and are regularly being re-inspected to ensure their non-diversion. One fifth of these chemical munitions and containers, together with 6,000 tonnes of chemical agents, have already been destroyed since the entry into force of the Convention. All 61 former chemical-weapons production facilities declared by 11 States parties have been inactivated and closed down. Thirty-six of them have already been either completely destroyed or fully converted to peaceful purposes. Almost 64,000 inspector-days have been devoted to verifying compliance with the Convention on the territory of 49 States parties and three quarters of approximately 1,100 OPCW inspections have taken place at chemical weapons-related facilities.

I am nevertheless worried by disparities in the numbers of chemical weapons that have been destroyed by the United States of America, which has already destroyed 23 per cent of its stockpile, and the Russian Federation, which has yet to complete the destruction of 1 per cent of its chemical weapons arsenal. The United States deserves much credit for the energy and resources that it has devoted to this task. India's efforts are also to be highly commended.

I am pleased to be able to add that there has been a significant change in Russia over the past year. Chemical weapons, including the most advanced Soviet designs, are already being destroyed in Russia under the watchful eye of our inspectors. The first full-scale Russian chemical weapons destruction facility will finally become operational in the first half of next year. The importance accorded by the Russian leadership to the task of destroying its inherited chemical weapons stockpiles is reflected in President Putin's appointment of Mr. Sergei Kiriyenko, a former Prime Minister of the Russian Federation, to oversee the implementation of the Russian chemical weapons destruction programme.

Information on the revised Russian chemical weapons destruction programme has been submitted to the OPCW. What is needed at present is for this programme to be translated into a detailed project plan, and for Russia — together with its international partners — to review ways in which the current destruction schedule could be further accelerated, including through broader international involvement and assistance. The OPCW stands ready to make a constructive contribution to this process.

In spite of a number of practical difficulties, the organization has been able to lay down the foundation of a credible verification regime for the global chemical industry. We have thus far been able to preserve the integrity of this critical non-proliferation pillar of the Convention, even though the national authorities of a few of our States parties were perhaps attempting to be overprotective with regard to their own chemical companies. We are applying consistent and equitable inspection rules everywhere, and we will not deviate from this principle.

The OPCW has at times been accused of being intrusive. Yes, we are intrusive, and we have to be so, but only to the extent required by the Convention for inspectors to fully accomplish their tasks. We have never — and I stress, never — gone beyond what the Convention requires us to do, and, with more than 300 industry inspections now accomplished, we have not been accused a single breach of the OPCW's rigorous and exacting confidentiality policy.

While the internal integrity of the inspection process has been preserved, the integrity of the industry verification regime as a whole is seriously challenged owing to the insufficient financial resources allocated by States parties to the verification of non-diversion in the chemical industry. If we were to fully utilize the Convention's inspection ceilings, the OPCW should probably have conducted at least several hundred more inspections of industrial plant sites in addition to the 132 inspections budgeted for this year.

I should emphasize that this is not a wish list. It is fully consistent with the non-proliferation objective articulated in the Convention, and is amply emphasized in the records of the Geneva negotiations that gave rise to the Convention in the first place. The need for a higher rate of inspection of chemical industry facilities is based on a thorough evaluation of the degree of risk to the Convention of those facilities that have already been inspected, as well as on the application of the Convention's own criteria for inspections of other plant sites that are to be randomly selected for inspections.

The Convention's system of verification and compliance cannot realize its full potential if Member States with concerns about possible non-compliance neglect to make full use of this system, including the instrument of challenge inspections. The aura of negativity associated with challenge inspections has perhaps been a major reason why not a single Member State has taken the initiative in this regard.

A challenge inspection is not necessarily a manifestation of distrust. Although it would certainly reflect a particular concern about possible non-compliance, such a concern — depending on its nature, of course — should not necessarily call into question the political commitment of the challenged State party to the Convention. I also fail to understand why a challenge inspection that did not prove non-compliance should be viewed as a failure. A challenge inspection is a measure which facilitates mutual confidence-building, and it should be seen in that light.

No matter how important verification may be, and still is, it is nevertheless not the whole story. Unfortunately, in the some four and a half years since the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), the Organization has not yet been able to achieve consensus on the role to be played by its international cooperation programmes — which contribute to the economic development of States Parties — in promoting the Convention's goals and objectives overall.

It is profoundly disheartening to hear that the Convention is only a "security treaty", without any acknowledgement of the tremendous non-proliferation impact that international cooperation projects have on both compliance and progress towards universality. The allocation of only 6 per cent of the OPCW budget to international cooperation activities is hardly a meaningful incentive for developing countries to join the CWC. Fortunately, a few States parties have voluntarily provided modest funds to keep a limited number of such projects alive. However valuable and important such voluntary and individual acts of assistance may be, a few States cannot, and should not, indefinitely fill gaps that need to be filled by the Organization itself.

By now, only 40 per cent of States Parties have informed the OPCW that they have implementing legislation in place to domestically enforce compliance with the obligations embodied in the Chemical Weapons Convention. If this worrisome situation is not corrected, it is possible that violators of the CWC may escape prosecution in some parts of the CWC community itself.

The OPCW can and should do more to provide legal advice to those States parties that have yet to

enact such legislation. I recently proposed that the OPCW launch an intensive programme to ensure that all States parties have effective legislation in place to prosecute violators of the CWC who are nationals of States parties to the Convention, thus offering a meaningful deterrent against such criminal activity. I am heartened in this regard by the statement in the First Committee of the Assembly of Ms. Avis Bohlen, United States Assistant Secretary of State for Arms Control, who mentioned that it is essential for States parties to

> "put in place national laws and other regulations that help to keep materials for making chemical weapons out of unauthorized hands and ensure effective prosecution of those who make or use chemical weapons." (*A/C.1/56/PV.5, p. 27*)

I am hopeful that funds to enable the Secretariat to carry out such efforts aimed at assisting specific countries will soon materialize.

A similar situation exists with regard to resources for the provision of assistance and protection to the targets or victims of possible chemical weapons attacks — in the form of gas masks, antidotes and medical supplies — in accordance with the requirements of the Convention. The majority of the States parties to the CWC do not have a national capacity to protect themselves from chemical attacks, including those by terrorists. The OPCW is at present the only internationally established source of such assistance.

While a number of offers of assistance have been made to the OPCW by 31 States parties that have the requisite resources and experience, there are serious gaps. The Voluntary Fund for Assistance, which is supposed to cover such gaps, today stands at approximately three quarters of a million dollars, barely enough for a one- to two-day assistance operation. The secretariat conservatively estimates that the amount of money in the fund must increase at least tenfold, if the OPCW is to effectively coordinate an adequate international response to a single request for assistance.

The level of commitment to a particular cause is usually proportionate to the level of resources made available to achieve the desired objective. The OPCW's verification workload has been increasing steadily since 1997, as required under the Convention, as have the demands on existing international cooperation projects. An additional 4,000 industrial facilities around the world became inspectable last year. Yet the value of the funds available to the OPCW in each of the past three years has decreased steadily in real terms. The situation became truly unbearable this year, when the organisation received only 54 million euros of actual income, 6 million euros less than the 60 million adopted in the OPCW budget. This 6 million euro gap in OPCW income represents one third of all appropriations allocated for programme delivery and for the day-to-day operation of the Secretariat.

Other resources are required to pay personnel-related costs. As a result of this shortfall, and in spite of radical cuts in spending ordered by me in an effort to protect the key programmes — verification and international cooperation and assistance — the OPCW will be able to conduct only 70 per cent of its planned inspection activity this year, when measured in inspector days. In particular, this year we only have the funds necessary to carry out one half of the inspections planned and budgeted for in the chemical industry and at chemical weapons storage and former chemical weapons production facilities. We have inspectors at the ready, but we do not have cash in the bank.

International cooperation programmes have also been cut to the bone. And we cannot just fire our inspectors, as some were suggesting. They would all be needed, even today, if sufficient funds were available for the necessary inspections to go ahead. We will definitely need all of our inspectors, and even more in the very near future, as the rate at which chemical weapons are being destroyed picks up even further.

We warned our States parties more than one year ago, before they adopted the budget, of the scope and the consequences of this year's shortfall. We stressed that, as a result, programme delivery would be seriously affected. Yet, the budget remained unchanged.

Regrettably, with very few exceptions, we have not received any help since then, and we have had to deal with the consequences of this situation on our own. We barely managed to prevent the OPCW from closing down this year. I am not sure that we will be able to avoid this next year, when budget problems are only likely to increase. It is regrettable that the implementing agency of one of the United Nations' 25 core treaties has to send such a sobering message to the

international community at the dawn of the new millennium.

I fail to understand why it is not possible to provide the organisation with only 6 million euros — a meagre amount, yet critical for a robust monitoring of chemical weapons and their destruction and for implementation of a credible non-proliferation programme in the global chemical industry, in the context of the only existing multilateral disarmament effort which is up and running at present. Watching the OPCW stumble at this critical moment because it is under-budgeted cannot serve the national interest of any Member State, let alone of the non-proliferation and disarmament organization that each Member State has committed itself to support.

Is it not time for the international community to recommit itself to the noble goals of the Convention that it affirmed, both in 1993, when the CWC was signed in Paris, and again in 1997, when it entered into force around the world?

I constantly remind myself that these great disappointments must be measured against the Convention's outstanding track record of real success. The OPCW is indeed implementing a unique, non-discriminatory, multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation regime of unprecedented scope and sophistication. The reason why it exists is self-evident: one simply cannot dream of succeeding in a global endeavour of such magnitude without a democratic coordination centre, without a forum and an independent body for constant monitoring of the progress achieved, and without a multilateral organizational structure entrusted with taking decisions and shifting gears, if necessary, when the implementation of the regime so requires.

The OPCW is morally strong today because its States parties are assured that the Convention's rules and procedures apply equally to all of them. There are no double standards there; there is no preferential treatment. The professionalism and impartiality of our inspection and verification work have consistently drawn praise from our States parties and from the international community at large. The OPCW has an unequalled concentration of professional expertise from 66 different countries on both chemical weapons and the operation of the chemical industry, a capacity and a resource which is truly one of a kind and which has never been more greatly needed than now.

Our success since 1997, in particular as regards verification, is undeniable proof that multilateral international disarmament instruments can and do work very effectively indeed. The OPCW has already contributed in a very tangible way to the strengthening of international security and has done so at a fraction of the cost of its less multilateral alternatives. What is even more important is that we have arrived at today's result by consensus and cooperation, rather than through pressure or coercion. And with stronger backing from our "shareholders", the organisation can deliver much more and can become much stronger politically, as well.

One hundred forty-five countries have joined an international coalition to destroy chemical weapons worldwide and to prevent their re-emergence anywhere. The coalition exists. It needs to be built upon and put to full use.

The Acting President: Before giving the floor to the next speaker, I should like to remind delegations that, by paragraph 7 of the annex to its resolution 55/285 of 7 September 2001, the General Assembly decided that

> "A joint debate shall be held on the cooperation item, during which all or some aspects of cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations may be addressed."

I now give the floor to the representative of Equatorial Guinea, who, in the course of the statement, will introduce draft resolution A/56/L.25/Rev.1.

Mr. Ecua Miko (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the member States of the Economic Community of Central African States, which my country, Equatorial Guinea, currently chairs, I have the honour, the duty and the pleasure of introducing to the Assembly revised draft resolution A/56/L.25/Rev.1, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Community of Central African States".

Indeed, before summarizing the contents of this draft resolution, I should like once again to voice the profound and sincere thanks of the member States of the Community in general and of Equatorial Guinea in particular for the massive support this General Assembly gave to resolutions 55/22 and 55/161, of 10 November and 12 December 2000 respectively, the first dealing with institutionalizing cooperation

between the United Nations and the Economic Community of Central African States, and the second granting observer status to the Community in the General Assembly.

Over the last decade, the vast majority of the member States of the Community have been and continue to be the target and focus of political conflicts, fratricidal war and constant acts of destabilization, which day after day not only bring about the loss of many innocent lives and the disappearance and displacement of desperate populations on a massive scale, but also the systematic destruction of the fragile economies of the affected countries, and are the main reason for which their respective constitutional institutions do not function.

In this connection, and to overcome the gloomy and desperate situation in the subregion — which is essentially marked by the prolongation and recurrence of internecine wars and the emergence of new conflicts and hotbeds of tension — the Secretary-General responded favourably to the initiative of the Economic Community of Central African States and created the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, in May 1992, whose work towards promoting peace and conflict management and prevention we commend.

For their part, since 1999, the heads of State and Government of the subregion have been demonstrating their firm willingness and determination to revitalize the Economic Community of Central African States, turning it into an instrument for promoting peace and security throughout the subregion and for cooperating for the development of their peoples and, on that underpinning, finding ways and means to meet the challenges of globalization together.

Indeed, the Council of Ministers of the Economic Community of Central African States, which met in special session in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, on 8 and 9 October this year, adopted a programme of action of the general secretariat of the Economic Community of Central African States for the 2002-2003 biennium. Among other activities, the programme envisages making the bodies of the Council of Peace and Security in Central Africa operational, fighting drugs in Central Africa, combating the trafficking in small arms and light weapons, taking steps to ensure freedom of movement, making the Network of Parliamentarians operational, establishing a subregional centre of human rights and democracy, having an autonomous financing machinery for the Community, liberalizing trade within the Community, holding consultations on sectoral projects involving cooperation in the framework of regional integration, creating a women's network in Central Africa, reactivating the Federation of the Chambers of Commerce within the Community, strengthening cooperation with other regional economic communities, preparing for negotiations with the European Union, cooperating with the United Nations system and other institutions, and so on.

There can be no doubt that a programme of action of such dimensions, which is indeed ambitious, will not succeed solely on the strength of the political determination of those that drafted it; it must also have the necessary assistance and cooperation from the international community, particularly since we are talking about a subregion that, while rich in natural resources, is stricken by political turbulence of all kinds.

The Secretary-General's report entitled "Road map towards the implementation of the Millennium Declaration" (A/56/326) skilfully and eloquently reflects strategies for moving forward to meet these goals, including, on page 43, "to give full support to the political and institutional structures of emerging democracies in Africa" and, on page 44, "to encourage and sustain regional and subregional mechanisms for preventing conflict and promoting political stability, and to ensure a reliable flow of resources for peacekeeping operations on the continent".

The tenor of the Secretary-General's report contained in document A/56/301 and the notes thereto reflect the embryonic nature of institutional relations established a year ago, tying the Economic Community of Central African States to the United Nations system. And it is on that basis that we take pleasure in presenting to the Assembly draft resolution A/56/L.25/Rev.1. Its preambular paragraphs once again include the key elements that sustain cooperation, both bilateral and multilateral, with the Economic Community of Central African States, with a view to guaranteeing peace, security and stability throughout the subregion and thus ensuring the needed and yearned-for economic, political, social and cultural development of its peoples through machinery designed to restore the rule of law, democracy, respect for human rights and an awareness of the challenges and opportunities entailed by the globalization and

liberalization of the economies of the countries of the subregion.

The operational part of the draft resolution takes note of the Secretary-General's report; welcomes and commends the assistance given to the Community; emphasizes the importance of appropriate cooperation between the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, and the Economic Community of Central African States; and urges all Member States and the international community to contribute to the efforts of the Community to advance the process of economic integration and development, promote democracy and human rights and consolidate peace and security in Central Africa.

By the same token, the draft resolution urges the United Nations and the international community to help to strengthen the means existing in the region to ensure that the Community has the necessary capacity with regard to prevention, monitoring, early warning and peacekeeping operations and to support the creation of special economic zones and development corridors, with the participation of the private sector.

Finally, the draft resolution requests the Secretary-General to continue to broaden contacts with the Community, with a view to encouraging and harmonizing cooperation with institutions, and to report on the implementation of the present resolution — which we hope will be adopted by consensus — to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session.

On behalf of the sponsors and those that are partners of Central Africa, I should like to announce before concluding the additions that were made in operative paragraph 7 of the revised draft resolution, and I quote from the English text:

> "and to implement the goals, targets and commitment of the United Nations conferences and the Millennium Declaration, in particular, to strengthen the role of women in the development process".

After that, operative paragraph 9 will automatically be stricken from the revised text.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of India, who in the course of his statement will introduce draft resolution A/56/L.35.

Mr. Bishnoi (India): The need for cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union is more real now than it has ever been before. Durable solutions for the enormous range of challenges and problems that most societies face require the promotion of democracy, of tolerance and of respect for diversity. It is those who overthrow these principles who also seek to strike at societies which uphold them as their highest goals.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union, through its commitment to the Universal Declaration on Democracy and to the promotion of pluralistic systems of representative government, can be an important ally of the United Nations in facing up to the challenges which confront the world community today.

We are indeed gratified that the Secretary-General's report reflects growing and mutually beneficial cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). The two organizations share common concerns: democracy, respect for human rights, equitable economic growth, sustainable development, social progress and the achievement of international peace and security. There is thus much that the United Nations and the IPU can bring to each other. Parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union can be a bridge between the global and the local. By mobilizing public opinion, they can contribute to forging national support for international cooperation.

It is an honour for me, on behalf of the other sponsors, to introduce draft resolution A/56/L.35, on "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union". In addition to those listed in document A/56/L.35, the following delegations have joined in sponsoring the draft resolution: Algeria, Andorra, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Benin, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Burundi, Cameroon, Chile, China, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Denmark, Egypt, Estonia, Georgia, Ghana, Greece, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Israel, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malaysia, the Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nauru, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Panama, Peru, the Philippines, Poland, the Republic of Moldova, San Marino, Senegal, Slovakia, South Africa, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam and Zambia.

The operative part of the resolution welcomes the ongoing efforts to explore ways in which a new and strengthened relationship may be established between the United Nations and the IPU and encourages member States to continue their consultations. It also welcomes the efforts by the IPU to provide for a parliamentary contribution and enhanced support to the United Nations and calls for the cooperation between the two organizations to be consolidated further.

It is our hope that the draft resolution can, like similar texts in previous years, be adopted by consensus.

The Acting President: I call now on the representative of Nauru, who in the course of his statement will introduce draft resolution A/56/L.29.

Mr. Clodumar (Nauru): Nauru has the honour to introduce draft resolution A/56/L.29 under agenda item 21, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum", on behalf of the sponsors, and in particular in its capacity as Chair of the group of Pacific Islands Forum countries represented at the United Nations. I should like to announce that since the publication of the document the following countries have become sponsors of draft resolution A/56/L.29: Barbados, Belarus, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, France, Ireland, Japan, Malaysia, Norway, Pakistan, the Philippines, Portugal and the United Kingdom. I wish to express the group's sincere appreciation to those countries that have joined us in sponsoring the draft resolution.

The Pacific Islands Forum enjoys a special relationship with the United Nations through its observer status in the General Assembly and in the United Nations funds and programmes operating in the region. Over the past decade, that relationship has matured in terms of confidence and of a determination to strengthen cooperation in areas such as fisheries, small business enterprises, trade, human rights, democracy, peace-building and oceans management. The Forum and its member countries welcome what the United Nations can do and has done for our region, and we, in partnership, wish to continue offering our expertise and resources in doing more to work with the United Nations and in serving the wider international community.

As the Forum celebrates its thirtieth anniversary this year as the principal multilateral body in the Pacific Islands Forum region, the demands of our members and those of the international community have also increased, thus shaping the interventions required by the organization. That confidence has been demonstrated, inter alia, through the initiatives and policy decisions set out in various declarations and communiqués of the Pacific Islands Forum.

As I stated in the General Committee back in September, Forum member countries requested the inclusion of this item as a new item on the Assembly's agenda. It provides a useful opportunity to consider the unique issues and emerging threats facing the Pacific Islands Forum countries. It also sharpens our commitment to facilitate wider dialogue between the United Nations and the Forum.

By draft resolution A/56/L.29 the Assembly would welcome the ongoing efforts towards closer cooperation between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum, including the assistance provided by the United Nations towards the maintenance of peace and security in our region. The Assembly would affirm the need to strengthen that cooperation in the areas of economic and social development, as well as in political and humanitarian affairs.

The Assembly would urge the specialized agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system to continue to work closely with the Secretary-General to enhance the coordination of United-Nations-related activities in the Pacific. That will become increasingly important as we move towards the 10-year review of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, which is to take place at Johannesburg next year, and the five-year review of the Millennium Summit Declaration.

We commend the efforts of the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, to bring various regional organizations into the United Nations family and to advance our mutual political will to implement the outcomes of recent global conferences, of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations and of the Millennium Summit.

Finally, we pledge our commitment to do our part; we hope that through this partnership of cooperation and friendship we can work together to reaffirm and enrich our collective efforts with a view to building lasting peace and bringing about sustainable development for our countries and the Pacific Islands Forum region as a whole. This is an opportunity that we cannot let go.

We seek the Assembly's support and recommend the draft resolution for adoption by consensus. We shall stand firm to make our contribution to its implementation.

The Acting President: I call on His Excellency Mr. Mircea Geoana, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Romania.

Mr. Geoana (Romania): I welcome this opportunity to address the General Assembly today in my capacity as Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). I have come to New York fresh from the conclusion of the ninth OSCE Ministerial Council, held in Bucharest on 3 and 4 December.

Before addressing the general topic of cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE, I would like to say a few words about the outcome of that Bucharest meeting. The principal theme was inevitably the war on terrorism. In the immediate aftermath of the barbaric attacks of 11 September, the OSCE echoed General Assembly and Security Council resolutions in condemning those attacks as a dangerous threat to our security and stability and to our common values. As a reflection of the OSCE's determination to contribute to international efforts against terrorism, the OSCE Ministerial Council adopted, on 4 December, a wide-ranging plan of action for combating terrorism.

As I recognized in my opening address to the Council, the OSCE is not the lead organization on terrorism. However, we can play a role in addressing root causes — namely, political, social and economic weaknesses in society which extremist ideologies exploit. Under the Bucharest plan of action, OSCE States have pledged to expand existing activities which contribute to the global fight against terrorism and to increase bilateral and multilateral cooperation within the OSCE and with the United Nations and other international and regional organizations.

The OSCE will offer assistance to participating States in implementing international anti-terrorist conventions and protocols; it will increase its activities to promote the rights of persons belonging to national minorities and take action to prevent and suppress the financing of terrorist activities — for instance, through training in counter-terrorism-related issues for national financial personnel.

Other proposals for preventive action against terrorism include practical support for OSCE States through existing institutions, including supporting the law enforcement capacity of States and strengthening domestic legal frameworks and institutions that uphold the rule of law, as well as facilitating increased border monitoring where appropriate. OSCE States have also committed themselves to measures aimed at preventing the movement of terrorist individuals or groups, such as measures to ensure the security of identity papers and travel documents and to prevent their counterfeiting, forgery and fraudulent use.

The OSCE and the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention will be organizing an international conference on terrorism in Bishkek on 13 and 14 December at the invitation of the Government of Kyrgyzstan. The Bishkek International Conference on Enhancing Security and Stability in Central Asia: Strengthening Comprehensive Efforts to Counter Terrorism will provide the first opportunity to discuss the implementation of the Bucharest action plan, especially as regards practical support for the OSCE States in Central Asia.

We have asked the Secretariat to circulate to the Assembly the Ministerial Declaration and the other decisions and statements agreed in Bucharest by the OSCE Ministerial Council. These reflect the main concerns of the chairmanship and the OSCE member States during the past year and set out the direction for future activity. To save time, I will not summarize these now, but the details are contained in the text that is being circulated to the Assembly. We were encouraged that a consensus was reached on so many documents in Bucharest, which we believe is indicative of the new spirit of solidarity and determination that has emerged since 11 September.

Turning now to the areas of common interest and activity for the United Nations and the OSCE, I will report briefly on what we have done this year and make some suggestions, based on our chairmanship experience, on what more can and should be done to strengthen our joint efforts.

The United Nations and the OSCE share a common agenda on many issues. Our priorities are to build a safer and more prosperous world where human rights are respected, economic inequalities are redressed, conflict can be prevented and existing

conflicts can be contained and brought to a negotiated settlement.

There are considerable advantages to be gained from a rational division of labour based on the respective strengths of each organization. The OSCE's advantage lies in its specialization in building democracy, its field activities and the flexibility and speed of its response. We are fortunate to have the support of specialist institutions on human rights, national minorities and freedom of the media that are working to promote the rule of law and democratic institutions and to build multi-ethnic societies. We are unique in that we have a network of missions on the ground that are active on a broad range of issues, from election monitoring and judicial reform to border monitoring and police training.

The cooperation established between the United Nations and the OSCE in Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Georgia shows the complementarity of our two organizations.

I consider our joint activity in Kosovo a regional model of effectiveness. Our cooperation in preparing for the elections last month for a provisional self-government, under Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), was exemplary. Following Mr. Haekkerup's success in finalizing the Framework Agreement, our Mission was tasked with the registration of political parties and voters, which it accomplished in spite of the tight deadline. In addition, it did an excellent job in organizing the actual elections on behalf of the international community. As a result of our concerted efforts, we have ensured that the new Assembly will be representative of all communities living in Kosovo. Non-Albanian minorities secured a sizeable percentage of the vote, which guarantees them representation in the 120-seat Assembly beyond the 20 seats allocated under the Framework Agreement.

The Assembly is already aware, from previous OSCE reports, of the success of the Kosovo Police Service School, through which the OSCE Mission provides police training, while the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) is responsible for deployment. To date, the Kosovo Police Service School has provided basic training to some 4,000 locally recruited police officers. These are important steps towards reconciliation and integration. The challenge now is for the United Nations and the OSCE to encourage the development of transparent and accountable institutions which are self-sustaining.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, we have continued to work on building strong institutions. A special area of activity has been our assistance in preparing new election legislation. This has now been adopted and implemented, so that future elections will be organized under the control of the newly established Election Commission. We are taking an active part in discussions chaired by the Office of the High Representative on the streamlining of the international civilian presence in Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to improve coordination and efficiency. We fully support this process and are willing to work with the Office of the High Representative on, for instance, closer cooperation in field activities.

One issue of special interest to me is the successor to the International Police Task Force (IPTF). As OSCE Chairman-in-Office, I am bound to be partial. However, the success of OSCE policing activities, not only in Kosovo but more recently in southern Serbia and now in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, has convinced me that the OSCE could also take on a similar role in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We have proven experience in this field in the Western Balkans. Our existing programmes are an integral and highly important part of confidence-building measures in the region. We have just decided to create a Senior Police Adviser post in the OSCE secretariat. We have a system of Rapid Expert Assistance and Cooperation Teams, which can identify field personnel and get them on the ground quickly. In addition, we are sufficiently flexible to work alongside other partners, such as the United States and the European Union.

In Georgia, where the OSCE works alongside the United Nations, the OSCE has seen some positive developments towards the settlement of the Georgia-South Ossetia conflict following a meeting of experts in Bucharest in September, although a comprehensive solution remains elusive. The border monitoring operation in Georgia is working well. The Permanent Council in Vienna has now been tasked by OSCE Foreign Ministers to explore proposals to extend the border monitoring operation to the region bordering Ingushetia in the Russian Federation. OSCE Ministers have called for a comprehensive settlement on the status of Abkhazia, where the human rights situation is a cause for concern. We are pleased that the Georgian

and Russian Governments have agreed to establish a joint commission to investigate reported cases of bombing in the Pankisi Valley.

The international focus on Central Asia has increased since 11 September. The OSCE Central Asian States have been concerned for some time about the threat to their security from the situation in Afghanistan. I believe it is time for the international community to devote more attention and resources to this region, and that this should continue even after the present situation in Afghanistan has been settled. The latest news from the Bonn talks is encouraging. I suggested at the Bucharest meeting of the Ministerial Council that we should explore how we might help to develop a concept of society in the region that would address the problems of security, democratization and economic growth. Building a "partnership for modernity" for Central Asian States and their immediate neighbours would be a useful venture for United Nations and OSCE collaboration.

The United Nations and the OSCE share a mutual interest in other important areas. I will now mention a very important effort that we have made over the last year to ensure that the right conditions are in place for the speedy and safe return of refugees and internally displaced persons. We are actively monitoring progress in the return of refugees and internally displaced persons in the Western Balkans, including steps for the restitution of property. In the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, our observers have recently begun to monitor the return of police to the villages affected by the conflict this year so that refugees and internally displaced persons feel confident enough to return home. We are working closely in this with field representatives of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

The cross-border threat to security and economic growth from organized crime calls for close cooperation at the regional, interregional and international levels, especially as the links between organized crime and the financing of terrorist groups become more apparent. We have been working in the OSCE to stimulate greater efforts by OSCE States to tackle these negative trends nationally and in cooperation with others.

Our focus in the OSCE this year on good governance and transparency was designed to help to find solutions to the problem of corruption, which not only prevents the development of broad-based economic and social prosperity but also allows organized crime to flourish unchecked.

I should now like to say a few words on cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE. The Romanian chairmanship, motivated by a strong belief in complementarity, synergy and a clear division of labour, has been keen this year to strengthen the interaction between the OSCE and our key partners, the United Nations, the European Union, NATO and the Council of Europe.

We welcome the latest report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 55/179. We are particularly pleased with the increasing number of meetings between United Nations and OSCE officials, starting with my own discussions with the Secretary-General and the Security Council.

The lessons we have learned from the conflicts and crises in the OSCE area have highlighted the need for closer and more efficient cooperation among all organizations working together in Europe.

United Nations-backed cooperation between NATO, the European Union and the OSCE is a key element to stabilizing the Western Balkans. The system of consultation and coordination between the international community in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia that was set up on an ad hoc basis was a critical factor in resolving the crisis there this year. Consultation between the OSCE, the European Union, NATO and UNHCR is continuing as the process of reconciliation and building a multi-ethnic society advances.

But coordination and cooperation between international organizations should extend beyond crisis management to early conflict prevention, through building strong democracies, strong economies and strong societies. Secretary-General Kofi Annan stated in paragraph 6 of his latest report on the work of the Organization (A/56/1),

> "Conflict prevention is of critical importance and requires a comprehensive understanding of the underlying causes and dynamics of violent conflict. The Organization's authority as a credible instrument to prevent conflict depends on its capacity to address the root causes of deadly conflict."

Based on our experience this year as OSCE Chairman-in-Office, addressing the root causes requires greater consistency in the application of the rule of law and human rights standards, especially those relating to the integration of ethnic and religious minorities; intensified efforts to reduce economic disparities through support for sound economic policies, backed by good governance and transparency; and efficient mechanisms for regional cooperation. This is an effort that requires a concerted strategy.

We need a clear process of consultation between the OSCE and our partner organizations, particularly the United Nations, NATO and European Union. Our joint efforts in the Western Balkans could be used as a model for introducing new methods of consultation, and our joint experience could be valuable in deciding how most appropriately to extend our partnership to activities in other parts of the OSCE space: in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and, of course, Central Asia.

Existing procedures could be developed and expanded. I suggest a number of additional measures for United Nations-OSCE cooperation: the establishment of an efficient information exchange mechanism on potential crises and lessons learned from common field missions; exchange of liaison officers; joint training of staff in the field of early warning and prevention; development of common indicators for early warning; and establishment of a database on the conflict prevention capabilities of the United Nations and regional organizations such as the OSCE.

As a country that knows from hard experience the difficult process of political and economic transition, Romania is a firm believer in the multidimensional vocation of the OSCE. It is our hope that our 2001 OSCE chairmanship has confirmed Romania's credentials as a promoter of confidence and stability in Europe, and an active contributor in consolidating a community of prosperous and stable states, based on respect for shared democratic values. We intend to continue our active involvement as a member of the OSCE Troika.

The Romanian delegation to the United Nations is working closely with the delegations of the other OSCE Troika countries — Austria and Portugal and, starting 1 January, the Netherlands — and other interested delegations in preparing a draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE, based on the documents of the Bucharest meeting of the Ministerial Council. I would ask all United Nations Members for their support in adopting this resolution by consensus.

The Acting President: I now call on the representative of Lithuania to introduce draft resolution A/56/L.31.

Mr. Šerkšnys (Lithuania): It is an honour for me to take the floor today in order to introduce resolution A/56/L.31, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe", submitted jointly by the 4-L group, namely, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg and Lithuania.

I would also like to thank the other sponsors of the draft resolution for their contributions and support. I should like to announce that, since its publication, the following countries have become sponsors of draft resolution A/56/L.31: Belgium, Colombia, Greece, Ireland, Japan, Nauru, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

The Council of Europe has a long and successful history of promoting unity among its members on the basis of shared values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. The Council of Europe has made an invaluable contribution to the promotion and strengthening of the purposes and principles of the United Nations within the European region.

Since 1989 the Council of Europe has included most of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, including my own country, and has supported them in their efforts to implement and consolidate their political, legal and administrative reforms. With the accession of Armenia and Azerbaijan earlier this year, the organization now has 43 member States. It has thus become a truly pan-European organization.

Lithuania took up the chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 8 November and will remain in the chair until May 2002. As Chairman-in-Office, Lithuania will seek to continue and increase dialogue and complementary action between the United Nations and the Council of Europe. We would encourage a regular exchange of views on issues related to the fight against and prevention of terrorism, organized crime and money-laundering. Intensive coordination in the areas of standard-setting for a pluralist democracy and respect for human rights will also be promoted.

One of the main areas of cooperation between the two organizations is found in the sphere of protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms. In this regard, important close cooperation has been developed, in particular with the Offices of the United Nations High Commissioners for both Human Rights and Refugees. The Council of Europe makes its contribution to the work of the United Nations by providing its expertise in strengthening human rights, democracy and the rule of law and by participating in human rights educational programmes. Of no less significance is pragmatic cooperation at the technical level, including joint assistance activities in matters such as human rights training of the staff of field missions, prevention of trafficking in women and girls and so on. The Council of Europe continues to contribute to major human rights events organized by the United Nations. Last year we praised the Council's activities in preparation for the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. Now the Council of Europe stands ready to follow up with implementation of the relevant principles at the European level. We expect the organization to make a significant contribution to the forthcoming United Nations special session on children and the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg.

The Council of Europe has also given important support to the setting up of the International Criminal Court. On 10 October, the Committee of Ministers adopted a declaration calling on all members and applicant and observer States who have not yet done so to become parties to the Rome Statute of the Court as soon as possible and to adapt without delay their legislation accordingly.

Through its work, the Council of Europe has made an invaluable contribution to conflict prevention and peace-building and to long-term post-conflict peace-building through political and institutional reform. For this purpose, the Council of Europe cooperates closely with the United Nations and its specialized agencies and bodies in many ways. I would also single out the Council's active contribution to the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), notably with regard to human rights, including the rights of minorities, reform of the judiciary, education, population registration and cultural heritage. At the request of UNMIK and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Council of Europe assumed responsibility for observation of the electoral processes both for the municipal elections in September 2000 and the Assembly elections held on 17 November.

Let me also mention the major contributions of the Council of Europe to re-establishing public order, rebuilding democratic institutions and protecting human rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and its significant contributions to the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe.

Following the tragic events of 11 September, the Council of Europe reacted swiftly by agreeing on a broad package of initial decisions to strengthen its own action in the fight against terrorism. As an organization that since 1949 has dedicated itself to human rights, the rule of law and pluralist democracy, the Council by its very nature is an organization determined to combat terrorism, a phenomenon which repudiates these three fundamental values by resorting to violence.

At their meeting on 8 November, the Committee of Ministers decided to strengthen the legal framework established by the Council of Europe to combat terrorism and related forms of crime. It decided, among other things, to open the European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism to observer States and to urge member States to sign and ratify all relevant conventions and to consider their reservations. The Committee also adopted a new convention on cyber-crime, which subsequently was opened for signature at a ceremony in Budapest on 23 November. This instrument and others that relate to the fight against terrorism are open to States from all of the regions. Furthermore, the Committee of Ministers set up a multidisciplinary group on international action against terrorism, responsible for making proposals designed to improve existing instruments, while ensuring their overall consistency with the Council of Europe's basic standards of human rights and the rule of law.

The Council of Europe will also contribute its experience and know-how to the promotion of a broad intercultural and interreligious dialogue, with a view to enabling our society to find greater cohesion and reduce the risks of misunderstanding. For this purpose, the Council will participate with the United Nations and other international organizations in promoting the dialogue among civilizations. The Council will take advantage of its special assets and pan-European scope and take account, in particular, of Security Council

resolutions 1368 (2001) and 1373 (2001), which the Council of Europe's Foreign Ministers have welcomed and which must be given full effect without delay.

It is important that regular exchanges take place between the United Nations, the OSCE and the Council of Europe on issues of common interest, in particular with regard to action in the field. Therefore the practice of high-level tripartite meetings has been established between the United Nations Office in Geneva, the OSCE and the Council of Europe. My delegation attaches great importance to these meetings, which should ensure efficiency and avoid duplication of efforts.

In conclusion, let me express my confidence that the General Assembly will welcome the wide range of cooperation that has developed between the United Nations and the Council of Europe. This is properly reflected in draft resolution A/56/L.31 on cooperation between the two organizations. My delegation wholeheartedly recommends adopting its text without a vote.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Tajikistan, who, in the course of the statement, will introduce draft resolution A/56/L.32.

Mr. Alimov (Tajikistan) *(spoke in Russian)*: On behalf of the sponsors of draft resolution A/56/L.32, and as the representative of the member States of the Economic Cooperation Organization, it is a great honour for me to introduce this draft resolution, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization".

It is important to point out that, during the time which has passed since the adoption of the Assembly's previous resolution on this subject, cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization has continued to grow on the broadest basis. This is certainly evidence of the fact that, on the one hand, the Economic Cooperation Organization has become an effective, functioning community of States with common socio-economic goals and objectives. On the other hand, it shows an increasing interest on the part of the international community in the region where Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are located.

The draft resolution before us indicates that one of the main objectives of the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization is to promote international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian nature. It expresses grave concern about the prevalent drought and its devastating impact on the socio-economic situation in some of the States members of the organization.

The draft resolution stresses the importance of expanding international cooperation in resolving problems of globalization of the region of the Economic Cooperation Organization, through the integration of member States into the world economy. It notes with satisfaction that cooperation between the United Nations Development Programme and the Economic Cooperation Organization is growing, and it welcomes the increased cooperation between the Economic Cooperation Organization and the International Trade Centre, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the World Trade Organization. The draft resolution also welcomes the growing cooperation between the Economic Cooperation Organization and the international financial institutions, as well as the efforts of the member States of the Economic Cooperation Organization in opening international passenger traffic through the Trans-Asian Railway main line.

The document expresses appreciation of United Nations resolution 55/181, of 21 December 2000, on the transit environment in landlocked States in Central Asia and their transit developing neighbours. It notes the increasing problem of the production, transit and abuse of narcotic drugs and their ill effects on the region, and calls upon international and regional organizations to assist, as appropriate, the Economic Cooperation Organization in fighting the menace of narcotics in the region.

The draft resolution appreciates the cooperation between the Economic Cooperation Organization and the Centre for International Crime Prevention. It notes with satisfaction the expansion of cultural ties in the region, under the auspices of the Cultural Institute of the Economic Cooperation Organization, and supports endeavours to promote the region's rich cultural and literary heritage, with possible assistance from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and other relevant entities.

The document contains an invitation to the United Nations to continue to provide technical assistance to member States of the Economic Cooperation Organization and its secretariat in strengthening their early warning systems, preparedness and capacity for timely response to natural disasters in order to reduce the human casualties and socio-economic impact of such disasters. It requests the Secretary-General to present to the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly a report on the implementation of the present resolution, and would have the General Assembly include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-seventh session the question of cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization.

The sponsors express their gratitude to the delegations of the European Union and the United States, which have made a valuable contribution to preparing the draft resolution, and suggest that it be adopted by consensus.

The Acting President: I now call on the representative of Lebanon, who, in the course of his statement, will introduce draft resolution A/56/L.34.

Mr. Tadmoury (Lebanon) *(spoke in French)*: I would first like to join those who have preceded me in expressing our deep gratitude to the Secretary-General for the quality and accuracy of his report entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the International Organization of la Francophonie". I would also like to thank the Secretary-General of the International Organization of la Francophonie (OIF), Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his constant efforts to promote both the role of OIF and the development of its relations with the United Nations.

There is no doubt that Lebanon has done its best to be prepared to host under the best conditions possible the Ninth Conference of Heads of State and Government of countries using French as a common language, which was supposed to have been held from 26 to 28 October. However, as the Assembly knows, the consultations carried out by the Secretary-General of OIF in the wake of the uncertainties brought about by developments in the international situation have regrettably resulted in the postponement of the Summit until the fall of 2002.

Lebanon, in this regard, is determined to do all it can so that, next fall, we can discuss in Beirut the theme "dialogue of cultures", which is all the more urgent in the face of risks of intolerance, exclusion and withdrawal, particularly after the dramatic events of 11 September.

I am deeply honoured now to present, on behalf of the countries of la Francophonie, the draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and OIF. It should be pointed out that the following countries have joined the ranks of its sponsors: Albania, Angola, Barbados, Cyprus, Egypt, Hungary and Ukraine.

Fortunately, cooperation between the United Nations and OIF has never failed to embrace not only the concerns of the member countries of la Francophonie, but also those of non-governmental, intergovernmental and regional organizations.

The draft resolution before us involves a number of aspects.

In political terms, cooperation between OIF and the United Nations is intensifying and taking the form of regular consultations between the secretariats of both organizations, consultations that pertain to a variety of subjects.

In this spirit of cooperation, OIF is becoming ever more directly involved in the work of the United Nations, as demonstrated at the Fourth High-Level Meeting between the United Nations and Regional Organizations, held in New York on 6 and 7 February 2001. At that gathering, OIF made a valuable contribution to international cooperation with regard to the consolidation of peace in all its forms.

Since the Eighth Summit, held in Moncton, Canada, OIF has broadened its political outreach with a view to facilitating conflict resolution in various African countries and encouraging the promotion of the rule of law, democracy and respect for human rights, as well as conflict prevention.

In economic, social and cultural terms, OIF and the United Nations have accelerated the pace of their cooperation, as shown in their close collaboration in the area of technical assistance for economic and social development, particularly in the least developed countries.

OIF has participated actively in expert meetings held within the United Nations to promote the role of women in civil society, in conformity with commitments undertaken at the Beijing Summit.

I should also emphasize that cooperation between OIF and the specialized agencies in the fields of

education, science and culture has both yielded fruitful results and intensified. An example of this is the support of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for the Francophone Institute for Energy and the Environment, as well as UNESCO's active participation in cultural activities of la Francophonie at French-speaking universities in Africa and Lebanon. These examples of cooperation reflect the dedication of the United Nations and OIF to the values upheld by both organizations in the service of economic and social development and cultural diversity.

I would like to point out that cooperation between OIF, the specialized agencies, and the funds and programmes of the United Nations, as well as the regional commissions, particularly the Economic Commission for Africa, should be strengthened as soon as possible so that we can promote poverty elimination, energy, sustainable development, education, training and the development of new information technologies, as stipulated in operative paragraph 14 of the draft resolution.

Lebanon very much hopes to see cooperation between the United Nations and OIF strengthened and expanded into ever increasing and diverse areas. It is from that perspective that my delegation invites the General Assembly to give its full support to the draft resolution.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt to introduce draft resolution A/56/L.26.

Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I have the honour to present, on behalf of the States members of the League of Arab States, the draft resolution contained in A/56/L.26, under agenda item 21 (e), "Cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States".

I wish to inform the General Assembly that the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has joined the list of sponsors of the draft resolution.

The League of Arab States was founded at the same time as the United Nations, in March 1945. Close links bind the two organizations, enabling the necessary cooperation and coordination, under Article 8 of the Charter, which is a source of pride for us. These relations have progressed ever since the General Assembly, at its forty-eighth session, adopted by consensus the resolution on cooperation between the organizations. Currently, the relationship between the United Nations and the League of Arab States is witnessing various forms of cooperation. Questions of common interest are basically those linked to international peace and security.

In this respect, and in the context of the events currently taking place in the occupied Arab territories, we feel that this cooperation should be increased and that the United Nations should play a larger role in putting an end to the continued aggression against the Palestinian people by Israeli occupation forces and in ending the occupation of Arab lands.

In addition, there is an urgent need to increase cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States in the economic, social and developmental areas, in particular in order to speed up development in the Arab world, and to achieve the joint objectives of both organizations.

The preambular paragraphs of the draft resolution reaffirm the two organizations' wish to strengthen their links in all areas and to continue to cooperate in order to achieve their common objectives.

As to the operative section, in paragraph 3, the draft resolution expresses the General Assembly's appreciation

> "to the Secretary-General for the follow-up action taken by him to implement the proposals adopted at the meetings between the representatives of the secretariats of the United Nations and other organizations of the United Nations system and the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States and its specialized organizations, including the general meeting on cooperation between the United Nations system and the League of Arab States and its specialized organizations, held from 17 to 20 July 2001".

The operative part also calls for increased cooperation in the political, economic, social, cultural and humanitarian areas. It also calls upon the specialized agencies and United Nations programmes to continue their support for and cooperation with the League of Arab States and to strengthen the capacity of member States of the League, especially in the area of information technology. Paragraph 6 (f) also calls upon the specialized agencies and other organizations and programmes of the United Nations system to inform

the Secretary-General, not later than 30 June 2002, of the progress made with regard to these objectives.

I wish on behalf of the Arab Group to call upon the General Assembly, which represents the international community, to support cooperation between the League of Arab States and the United Nations, and to adopt the draft resolution before us by consensus.

The Acting President: I now call on the representative of Zambia to introduce draft resolution A/56/L.37.

Mr. Musambachime (Zambia): It gives me great pleasure to be accorded this opportunity to introduce, on behalf of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the African Group, the draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity, contained in document A/56/L.37. At the outset, I would like to express sincere gratitude to our cooperating partners for their contributions in formulating this draft resolution. These include, among others, the European Union, Japan, the Russian Federation and the United States of America.

This draft resolution contains elements of the previous resolution on this subject while also reflecting new issues, such as the establishment of the African Union and the transition from the Organization of African Unity/African Economic Community to the African Union; the launching of the New African Initiative, now called the New Partnership for Africa's Development; and Africa's commitment to the fight against terrorism, as provided for in the OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism, adopted at the thirty-fifth ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the OAU in July 1999.

The draft resolution stresses the need for closer cooperation and coordination between the OAU and the United Nations in the area of peace and security, particularly with regard to conflict prevention, peacekeeping, peacemaking, post-conflict reconstruction, peace-building, support for democratization processes and good governance. Unless these elements are properly addressed and made operational, Africa's sustainable economic development and growth and the alleviation and eradication of poverty on the continent will remain remote pipe dreams.

The draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity is hereby presented for consideration, and it is our sincere hope that it will be adopted by consensus.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Indonesia who, in the course of his statement, will introduce draft resolution A/56/L.38.

Mr. Soeriaatmadja (Indonesia): It is indeed a pleasure for my delegation to speak in the current General Assembly deliberations on agenda item 21, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations".

The cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations is of paramount importance, particularly since challenges to humankind cannot be solely the responsibility of the United Nations. Due to the lack of resources, the United Nations has not always been capable of addressing issues that are critical to the international community.

The relevance of regional organizations in conflict resolution is undeniable, as they are uniquely placed to deal with region-specific problems. Successful regional efforts will depend not only on good relationships among member States of the organizations, but also on concurrent political commitment from each and every State in the region in particular, and the general support of the international community, through the United Nations.

The history of the United Nations notes a number of cases of thriving cooperation. In coping with the Haiti crisis in 1992-1993, for example, the United Nations cooperated with the Organization of American States. In the 1990s the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) together made efforts to restore peace in Somalia, Liberia, Burundi, Eritrea, Malawi and Rwanda. Concurrently, the Organization cooperated with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in addressing conflicts in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia and Kosovo.

The importance of this cooperation was given more weight when world leaders, in the Millennium Declaration, reiterated their commitment to support cooperation. My delegation supports the strategies for strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, as outlined in the Secretary-General's "Road map towards the

implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration".

We also welcome the principles and mechanisms suggested for cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizational arrangements in the field of peacekeeping, as developed by the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

My delegation continues to see the need for further study of modalities of cooperation within the context of emerging inter-multilateralism and in keeping with the spirit of Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter. Such further study could be carried out, inter alia, on the basis of referral by the Security Council and through subcontracting and partnership.

Let me now turn to some specific aspects of cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations that are of interest to my delegation. As regards cooperation between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System, the Council of Europe, the League of Arab States, the Economic Community of Central African States, the Economic Cooperation Organization, the OSCE, the OAU and the Pacific Islands Forum, we believe that such cooperation will contribute to the economic growth and political stability of their respective regions.

Indonesia has supported the endeavours of the United Nations in addressing conflicts in different regions by actively contributing personnel to United Nations missions in those regions. In Africa, Indonesia has been participating in the United Nations Missions in Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and in Europe, in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Georgia.

Indonesia accords special attention to the cooperation between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum. We fully support this cooperation, and we are very pleased to be one of the sponsors of the draft resolution on this issue. Indonesia also has been active in the Forum as a post-Forum dialogue partner.

As regards cooperation between the United Nations and the International Parliamentary Union (IPU), we believe that the United Nations and the IPU can work collectively in seeking solutions to the emerging economic and security challenges facing us and in charting a better future for all humankind through the establishment of a new family of nations that upholds the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. We hold the view that synchronized United Nations-IPU commitments are required in order to set a coherent course of action in addressing common issues.

Indonesia welcomes the Secretary-General's initiative, as outlined in his report entitled "Road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration", to conduct a joint review with the IPU of the cooperation agreement concluded between the organizations in 1996. With regard to the strategy of more engagement of parliaments in substantive issues addressed at the United Nations, in our view, further study of the modalities of that strategy remains imperative.

As far as the cooperation between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) is concerned, my delegation holds the view that the relationship agreement between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO, adopted on 15 June 2000, established an important foundation for improving the existing links and interaction between the two independent organizations. Better relationships may facilitate the achievement of the overarching aim of the Treaty — namely, to effectively contribute to the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons in all its aspects and to the promotion of international peace and security.

There is a common view among States signatories that full membership of the CTBTO in the Administrative Committee on Coordination will not only facilitate coordination and cooperation between the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO and the wider United Nations family, but will also allow the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO to fully contribute to the common effort of the international community to implement the Millennium Declaration.

My delegation shares the view that in times of increasing concern about the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the reports of the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO should be of particular relevance to the deliberations of the General Assembly. We deem it important that the Assembly receive reports about the developments and activities of the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO on a regular basis.

Before I conclude, in its capacity as Chairman of the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO, my delegation has the honour and pleasure to present to this plenary meeting a draft resolution, contained in document A/56/L.38, concerning the cooperation between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission. This draft resolution, which is procedural in nature, would serve as a basis for the CTBTO to present its report on its activities to the General Assembly in its session next year. We hope that Member States will lend their unanimous support to the draft resolution.

Mr. Baali (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): Beginning with this session, cooperation between the United Nations and the whole complement of regional organizations is being examined under a single agenda item. While we support this reform, the obvious goal is to rationalize the work of the General Assembly and make it more efficient, my delegation would like to stress the interest in and importance of continuing to examine this agenda item in the course of our work.

Some days ago, in the context of the agenda item on the causes of conflict in Africa, we took up the reports of the Secretary-General and of the Working Group dealing with this issue. My delegation made its contribution at that time, setting out in a somewhat detailed way the set of problems impinging on peace and development across the African continent in the light of the recommendations embodied in the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict in Africa. I will therefore confine myself today to taking stock of some salient aspects of cooperation between the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the United Nations specifically from the institutional perspective.

The consideration at this session of issues related to cooperation between the two organizations is taking place in the specific context in which the OAU's ongoing transition into the African Union will itself be a major factor affecting cooperation between the two organizations. The birth of the African Union is a historic event in that it constitutes a new framework Africans have endowed themselves with almost 40 years after the adoption of the OAU charter to promote multifaceted cooperation and effective integration across the continent.

In that regard, we note with satisfaction the readiness of the United Nations, referred to in paragraph 4 of the Secretary-General's report, to consider, together with the OAU, ways it can help the latter to put in place the new structural framework for the African Union. African countries currently committed to an exciting and demanding collective effort naturally expect substantial support from the United Nations and other regional groups to make it possible for them to derive maximum benefit from their experiences and, thus, enter into the new Union with optimal chances of success.

The Thirty-seventh OAU Summit, held in Lusaka last July, decided that the African Union would come into force at the next Summit. The next few months will therefore be a crucial period in the establishment of very important structures among the 17 bodies identified by the Constituent Act of the African Union, namely, the Conference of the Union, the Executive Council, the Committee of Permanent Representatives and the Commission. We are therefore more confident than ever that, as far as the prospects for cooperation between the two organizations are concerned, there already exists a considerable and mutually beneficial capital of experience and know-how. Proof of that are the numerous coordinating meetings that have been held between the two organizations, notably those held regularly every year between their respective secretaries-general. We call for strengthening those consultations and consolidating the United Nations OAU Liaison Office at Addis Ababa, given the paramount role this structure is called upon to play in coordinating and disseminating information between both organizations, particularly in the context of cooperation in the areas of peace and security on the continent.

We are talking here about the most important sector of this cooperation, in which we have together made some progress in recent years. The deployment of four peacekeeping missions on the continent — namely, the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) and the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) — and the encouraging results achieved to date bear witness, in our view, to positive developments in effectively coming to grips with issues of peace and security in Africa. Whether we are talking about the settlement plan for Western Sahara, the Lomé

and Abuja agreements on Sierra Leone, the Lusaka Agreement on the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo or the Algiers agreements on Ethiopia and Eritrea, coordination and cooperation between the OAU and the United Nations has been decisive in bringing to a successful conclusion the numerous peace efforts entered into by African leaders.

As to the membership of those missions, we should note the major involvement of African contingents in the military component, which illustrates — if there be need for it — that Africans are effectively contributing to the collective efforts of the international community. Greater logistical and technical assistance from developed countries in this area is nevertheless necessary and desirable.

While reiterating the primary responsibility incumbent upon the United Nations and the Security Council — in particular in maintaining peace and security throughout the world — it seems to us necessary that both the United Nations and the OAU jointly look at the status and level of coordination on the ground between the missions deployed by the Security Council and the bodies set up by the parties in the context of peace accords. Those include, for example, the Joint Military Commission in the context of MONUC, and the OAU observers in MINURSO.

Likewise, in the context of the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea, we should recall Algeria's tireless efforts at the helm of the OAU to put an end to that war between two fraternal countries and to lay the groundwork for a just and lasting political settlement between them. In the course of the laborious process that led to the Algiers agreements of 18 June and 12 December 2000, Algeria and the OAU, which were able to count on the backing of such partners as the United States and the European Union, regularly coordinated their efforts with the United Nations. The speed with which the Security Council acted to adopt resolution 1312 (2000), which set up UNMEE on 31 July 2000 — less than a month after the signing of the Algiers Agreement — clearly illustrates the level of coordination and consultation between the two organizations. The establishment of the Military Coordination Commission in accordance with the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities, and the logistical support given to OAU observers by UNMEE, made it possible for both organizations to pool their efforts in order to resolve military problems on the ground and to create favourable conditions to bring the political process to a successful conclusion.

As to the OAU-United Nations settlement plan for Western Sahara, we wish to point out the particular importance that Africa attaches to the comprehensive implementation of that plan in good faith by both parties to the conflict, including by organizing a referendum on self-determination — the logical conclusion of the matter. Moreover, the OAU has constantly reiterated this position at its various annual summits.

I should now like to turn to the issue of cooperation in the area of economic and social development. It must be said at the outset that this area has shown little progress despite the renewed commitment of the international community to come to the aid of Africa. The extent of the African continent's needs in this regard and the stagnation — indeed decline — in the resources available to the agencies and programmes of the United Nations system are the main reasons for the absence of progress. While African countries have mobilized to meet the challenges of underdevelopment, poverty and disease, they obviously cannot do so without the backing of the United Nations system, including the backing of the Bretton Woods institutions and of the international community as a whole.

While some good progress has been made here and there, the overall situation across the continent — where one fourth of all people living below the poverty line live — remains alarming in many ways. According to recent studies, to control current trends across the continent and attain the development objectives the international community set for itself between now and the year 2015, Africa must ensure a constant annual growth rate of 7 per cent over the next 10 years. This points to the extent of the challenges that must be met at a time when development aid, which is already meagre, continues to decline every year. Africa's debt continues to set new records and HIV/AIDS pandemic is far from being reversed.

The final review of the New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, planned for next year, will no doubt provide the United Nations, African countries and their development partners an opportunity to undertake a frank evaluation of the work done in the last 10 years in the framework of that initiative. We hope that will be an occasion to study the

reasons why that ambitious programme did not succeed and to draw appropriate lessons from what must rightly be called a failure.

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which was adopted at the last OAU Summit and which constitutes an appropriate and renewed framework for resuming cooperation between Africa and its partners, gives us grounds to hope that the problems encountered in the old initiatives will be overcome. The broad international support already enjoyed by this truly African initiative — which was reaffirmed at the last G-8 Summit and at the most recent meeting in Brussels between representatives of the European Union and the OAU — bode well for Africa.

In that regard, the United Nations can and must play a major role both to strengthen institutional capacity in Africa and to mobilize the necessary international support to make NEPAD a success. Furthermore, this is how we envisage the cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union in the years to come.

With regard to the contribution of the United Nations per se to development projects in Africa, it will continue to depend on the resources that its agencies and programmes manage to mobilize in the future for the benefit of the African continent. Those resources have in the past been the Achilles heel of cooperation between the OAU and the United Nations. For that matter, the same problem exists in another sector of cooperation between the OAU and the United Nations, namely, that of humanitarian action.

Given that conflicts, natural disasters and the expansion of poverty, Africa continues to have a large number of refugees. Although the numbers have declined somewhat, there are today about 7 million refugees in Africa. The absence of infrastructure and adequate ways of coping with refugee flows and natural disasters make it virtually impossible to come to grips with such situations solely with the means available to host countries.

In that regard, we should point out the vital role played by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), particularly in Africa. Permanent contact and cooperation between the OAU and UNHCR illustrate that humanitarian issues on the African continent are of interest and importance to both organizations.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that the problem of resources remains acute and that contributions made in response to the consolidated humanitarian appeals for Africa have never reached the level of three fourths of the necessary resources. We encourage UNHCR and the OAU to increase their cooperation in order to implement the global plan adopted at the thirty-seventh session of the OAU Council of Ministers and the agreement signed between the two organizations on 9 April 2001. We call on donor countries to further demonstrate their generosity so that in its humanitarian efforts in Africa the United Nations is not forced to make difficult and painful choices.

These are the thoughts my delegation wanted to share with the Assembly today in the wake of the Millennium Assembly and on the eve of the launching of the African Union. We want the African Union to be seen as an expression of African States' renewed desire to take control, assume their responsibilities on behalf of their peoples and open a new chapter of cooperation with the rest of humankind.

Mr. Kafando (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): One year ago, as a prelude to the Millennium Summit, the presiding officers of the national parliaments of almost every country met in this very forum to remind the world that, despite their organizational and structural differences, the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) nevertheless pursue the same objective, namely, to promote a world of justice and peace through dialogue and diplomatic means. By signing a cooperation agreement with the Inter-Parliamentary Union in 1996, the United Nations explicitly recognized that reality, and thus made manifest its desire to create a partnership with the world organization of parliaments in order to establish a synergy of efforts in various areas, particularly those of peace and security, economic and social development, international and human rights law, democracy and gender equality.

Resolutions 55/2, of 8 September 2000, and 55/19, of 8 November 2000, which both deal with the strengthening of cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, marked the beginning of the consolidation of the desirable cooperation between the two organizations. We should welcome them as a sign of our being on the right track.

The diplomatic activity of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and its members — that is,

national parliaments — on the international scene is today a reality in terms of the positions adopted by the IPU and its members with regard to the major challenges that spur the efforts of the international community. Whether it is a matter of peace and security; of development and the environment; of health, such as the AIDS pandemic; of society, such as high-risk social groups, like women and children; or general political matters, such as the democratization of society and the protection and promotion of human rights, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and national parliaments play their roles as fully as possible to seek appropriate responses to various concerns. In other words, the IPU spares no effort to join its efforts with those of States, non-governmental organizations and, above all, the United Nations, to overcome the challenges that mankind is facing.

In terms of the issues it dealt with, and especially given the relevance of the results of its work, the 106th Conference of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, which was hosted by my country from 9 to 15 September 2001, was a perfect illustration of the current diplomatic dynamic in the world organization of parliaments. My delegation is convinced that this dynamic diplomacy could provide support for the actions and efforts of the United Nations.

The draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, which we strongly support and of which we are a sponsor, will no doubt add a parliamentary dimension to some of the work of the United Nations. One thing is certain: we can no longer ignore parliamentary diplomacy, which has now become a reality. It is therefore urgent and vital that the United Nations grant permanent observer status to the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

In that regard, Burkina Faso deplores the foot-dragging that has caused a decision on this important question to be postponed to the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly. The only advantage to that is that the time given to Member States will lead them to reflect and better understand the urgent need to finally grant the Inter-Parliamentary Union — which has to a great degree proved its credibility — permanent observer status at the United Nations, with, of course, all the prerogatives that will allow it to play the role of a genuine consultative body vis-à-vis the United Nations.

Mr. De Ruyt (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The countries of Central and Eastern Europe associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated countries of Cyprus, Malta and Turkey, as well as the European Free Trade Association country member of the European Economic Area, Iceland, align themselves with this statement.

Allow me, first of all, to say how pleased I am that these draft resolutions have been brought together under a single agenda item on the general topic of cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations. We believe that by bringing together these draft resolutions, which deal with each organization individually, we shall be able to hold a single, comprehensive debate on the subject rather than several specific debates, which would prevent us from working out an overall United Nations policy on this matter. This is a step forward in our efforts towards revitalizing the General Assembly.

The subject of cooperation with regional organizations is cropping up more and more in the various bodies of the United Nations. In an increasing number of its operations on the ground, the United Nations is calling on the services of relevant regional organizations, among other things because in certain areas those organizations are able to provide expertise to complement that of the United Nations.

I would like to thank the Secretary-General for the individual reports that he has carefully drafted on cooperation between the United Nations and the organizations concerned. Those reports give us an overall view of how relations are developing, highlighting strengths but also weaknesses. They are undoubtedly the ideal way of helping us to improve our cooperation programmes.

Allow me to digress briefly to dwell on those regional organizations that have particularly strengthened their cooperation with the United Nations in recent years.

As regards the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Secretary-General's report rightly points out that the programme of cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU is an ambitious one. We are pleased that the programme has not only been followed up, but that its scope has also been broadened

and defined more accurately. Given that over a third of the countries in Africa are currently involved, or have been involved recently, in armed conflict, it is extremely encouraging to see that consultations on African issues between the two organizations are now a matter of routine. What is more, the OAU is itself in the process of transforming itself into the African Union, a development warmly welcomed by the European Union.

Coordination between the United Nations and the OAU in the area of conflict prevention, and the linking of their efforts on conflict resolution, is beginning to take shape. This is a considerable achievement, although there is still much to be done in this area, especially in the operational field. The two joint peacekeeping operations in which they are currently engaged are grounds for guarded optimism. In any case, the United Nations should capitalize on these two experiments in order to support in a more systematic way the development of the OAU's capacity to respond to political and military crises.

Africa has given fresh impetus to the development of the continent with the New Partnership for Africa's Development. We congratulate them on that. This is not just an African effort to solve African problems, but also an initiative with clear objectives that makes democracy, transparency, good governance, the rule of law and human rights fundamental components of development. Africa remains a top Union priority. We are its largest donor and its most important trading partner. The strategic partnership between Europe and Africa was reaffirmed and consolidated in April 2000 at the Africa-Europe Summit held in Cairo. The European Union is gratified by the success of the Africa-Europe mid-term ministerial conference organized following the summit in Brussels in October 2001 under the auspices of the OAU and the European Union. The European Union is also pleased that progress has been made on implementing the Cairo Plan of Action, and will make its contribution to see to it that the momentum can be continued within the existing mechanisms in the run-up to the next Africa-Europe summit, scheduled for 2003.

Considering the involvement and investment of the member States of the European Union in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the importance we attach to its cooperation with the United Nations should be clear. The OSCE has traditionally taken a pragmatic approach to relations with the international organizations working in its region. At the beginning of this week a ministerial meeting of OSCE member States was held in Bucharest to consider, among other things, the progress made on the Platform for Cooperative Security, adopted in Lisbon in 1996, which is designed to secure closer cooperation between the OSCE and other international organizations on the ground. As far as the United Nations is concerned, this year we have once again found ourselves working together more closely and energetically. I could quote the example of cooperation in the Balkans, Georgia or Tajikistan, where conflict-prevention, early warning, crisis-management and rehabilitation measures have been carried to a successful conclusion.

At that same ministerial meeting, the OSCE adopted a decision on combating terrorism aimed, inter alia, at ensuring implementation of United Nations decisions in that area. It also undertook to strengthen and develop its collaboration with the United Nations in combating terrorism. In addition, the two organizations can optimize the synergies existing in other spheres of action, such as human rights or the strengthening of democratic values in general. The OSCE and the United Nations maintain practical and effective collaboration. The two member States of the European Union that will preside over the OSCE in 2002 and 2003 will ensure the continuity of the collaboration.

The European Union attaches great importance to strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and national parliaments through the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). It welcomes the initiatives taken by the two organizations to allow parliaments to contribute to major events organized by the United Nations, as well as the action taken by parliaments under IPU leadership to support or supplement the work of the United Nations.

The European Union fully endorses the declarations of the Millennium Assembly and the Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments on the need for closer relations between the United Nations and the IPU. It is grateful to the Secretary-General for the interesting recommendations contained in his report on cooperation between the two organizations. The European Union regrets that, despite clear consensus among Member States, the General Assembly has not been able to take the decision to grant the IPU a new status. It hopes that, in the near

future, the General Assembly will take practical measures to strengthen cooperation between the two organizations, including by granting the IPU the status it deserves.

The European Union is pleased that cooperation between the United Nations and the International Organization of la Francophonie has continued to deepen over the last year. That cooperation now covers a growing number of areas of activity of mutual interest to both organizations. It is marked by a healthy awareness of their respective comparative advantages and by a constant desire for complementarity in the political, economic, social and cultural arenas.

The Union was pleased that the Bamako symposium held in November 2000 on the track record in the practice of democracy involved the United Nations in its proceedings. The Union welcomed this cooperation in promoting democracy, and particularly welcomed the fact that a range of measures were adopted in March 2001 with a view to strengthening cooperation between the International Organization of la Francophonie and the Electoral Assistance Division of the Department of Political Affairs of the Secretariat.

The United Nations and the Council of Europe have many values in common, including the promotion of human rights, pluralist democracy and stability. Cooperation between the two organizations makes sense given the expertise that the Council of Europe has gained in areas such as human rights, democratic institutions and the rule of law. As members know, the States members of the European Union also have a large stake in the work of the Council of Europe, and we therefore regard such cooperation with great enthusiasm.

That cooperation has been demonstrated through a number of fruitful initiatives. Let me mention the Council's assistance to Member States in ratifying and implementing the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court; the contribution of the Council of Europe to organizing next year's special session of the General Assembly on children; and the Council's role in the capacity-building programme of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, particularly its contribution to the preparations for and observation of the elections that took place in Kosovo three weeks ago. In the light of such past experience, the European Union is convinced that this cooperation should be intensified and developed to the greatest possible extent.

We are very pleased to note that cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference has continued over the past year. By participating in each other's work, the two organizations have been able to intensify their cooperation in areas of mutual interest. The periodic high-level meetings between the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and of the Organization of the Islamic Conference should be continued.

That is also how the European Union views cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States. We are happy to note that the two organizations have remained in close contact on many questions. It is therefore of the highest importance that the League of Arab States should further intensify its relations and contacts and improve its mechanism for consultation with United Nations specialized agencies and programmes. Contacts between the United Nations and the League should also continue at a high level with regard to exchanges of views and information on regional questions of mutual interest.

The European Union is most grateful to the Secretary-General for arranging last month's Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in his capacity as Depositary of the Treaty. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) has given firm support to United Nations efforts, in particular in the field of international security, arms control and disarmament. The European Union therefore welcomes the adoption of a partnership agreement between the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO and the United Nations and the conclusion of cooperation agreements with specialized agencies and programmes of the United Nations.

Let me now address the important work, both past and future, of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). The European Union has always attached the greatest importance to the activities of that organization, particularly given the risk that such arms might fall into the hands of terrorists. It welcomes the decision taken by the OPCW in May 2001 to approve the text of an agreement on relations between that organization and the United

Nations, an agreement which the General Assembly approved last September. The European Union hopes that mutually beneficial cooperation will be established between the two organizations for the common good.

The European Union encourages the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and of the Pacific Islands Forum to take the necessary steps to promote and extend cooperation between their secretariats in areas of mutual interest. That cooperation should, of course, extend to the specialized agencies and programmes of the United Nations, with which the Pacific Islands Forum and its associated institutions should initiate, maintain and increase joint consultations and programmes.

We welcome the role played by the Economic Cooperation Organization in the economic development of its member States, as well as the practical examples of cooperation between that organization and the United Nations. In the light of their shared objective, which is to promote international cooperation by addressing economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems, the two organizations should pursue and deepen their cooperation not only in areas where collaboration already exists but also in those which might profit from regional stability and from cooperation among the members of the organization.

It is our duty to intensify dialogue with regional organizations and to explore areas where such organizations provide the ideal complement to the activities of the United Nations. Regular exchanges of views and information can only enrich the work of the United Nations.

Mr. Nejad Hosseinian (Islamic Republic of Iran): At the outset, let me thank the Secretary-General for his concise report (A/56/122) on agenda item 21 (h), "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization". I would like also to extend my sincere appreciation to the Secretary-General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and his colleagues for their endeavours to strengthen and expand cooperation between ECO and various bodies and specialized agencies within the United Nations system.

As we all know, in our current global environment the world is becoming more and more integrated and, in a sense, borderless. In response, developing countries are establishing among themselves the necessary institutional frameworks to strengthen their individual and collective capacities so that they can benefit from the potential and the opportunities of the ongoing and unfolding process of globalization. The establishment of regional economic groupings has become the most common and appropriate approach by these countries towards smooth integration into the world economy. It should be emphasized, however, that the policy response to globalization needs to be comprehensive and coherent at both the regional and the international levels. Moreover, the establishment and strengthening of regional arrangements in the economic, trade and finance areas requires also a conducive international environment, especially in the field of capacity-building.

The Economic Cooperation Organization, comprising 10 developing countries, is a regional arrangement that aims at the expansion and consolidation of economic, technical and technological cooperation among its member States. The longer-term objective is the promotion of common institutions for the smooth movement of goods and capital among ECO member States and the facilitation of their gradual integration into the world economy and of their active and meaningful participation in the globalization process. In recent years, expansion of cooperation in the social and cultural fields has also received increasing attention within the ECO. The ECO secretariat, headquartered in Tehran, has focused its activities on finding the necessary means at the regional and international levels to address the common challenges facing member States and to facilitate the organization's participation in the international economy.

The recent situation in Afghanistan also underlines the need for more regional cooperation to create prosperity, which will serve to promote peace and security in the region. In particular, the establishment of cooperative arrangements with the United Nations bodies, agencies, funds and programmes has been at the heart of these efforts. These areas of fruitful cooperation have huge potential that needs to be explored further and realized, and we hope that the current situation in the region will give more impetus to the expansion and promotion of such cooperation.

The geographical position and economic potential of the Economic Cooperation Organization region,

which has oil and gas reserves and abundant mineral resources as well as a rich cultural and literary heritage, provide the necessary ingredients for sound and sustainable economic growth in various fields within the region and strong economic relations with neighbouring countries and regional economic groups. There is also considerable agricultural potential in the vast lands of the Economic Cooperation Organization countries, including both livestock and grain production. It should be added, however, that the political, economic, social and environmental challenges in the region are equally great.

The transition from centrally planned to market-oriented economies is among the important challenges for some of the organization's members. The landlocked countries of the Central Asian member States of the Economic Cooperation Organization, an area of pressing challenges for them and the entire organization, call for the strengthening of the transit infrastructure at the regional level.

The free flow of oil and gas from the area to the world market, if not hampered or distorted by politically motivated efforts from without, can certainly play a significant role in the overall development of the energy-producing States in the region and contribute to the integration of Economic Cooperation Organization members into the world economy as viable partners.

The rich cultural and literary heritage of the Economic Cooperation Organization region, and its abundant opportunities for cultural development, could also contribute to the expansion of tourism and cultural cooperation within the region.

As I have indicated, the challenges facing the region are also quite extensive. Protection of the environment, particularly in the Caspian Sea, the Aral Sea and some other areas of Central Asia, is among the major challenges facing the littoral States and concerned countries in the organization. The Economic Cooperation Organization region is also among those that are highly prone to natural disasters, particularly earthquake and drought. Since last year, the latter has taken a tremendous toll of human casualties, with a devastating impact on the socio-economic infrastructure of the region's countries.

The region also continues to be afflicted with the scourge of the illicit cultivation, production, trafficking and consumption of narcotic drugs, whose serious adverse impacts on the social, economic and security structure of the countries in the region are known to the international community and hardly need to be emphasized.

With regard to the question of cooperation with the United Nations system, the growing level of cooperation and joint programmes between the Economic Cooperation Organization and such bodies as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) is encouraging and needs to be strengthened further.

Last year, cooperation between the Economic Cooperation Organization and UNCTAD was extended to the new areas of implementation of the Transit Trade Agreement, the trade and custom clearance aspects of multi-modal transport in the Economic Cooperation Organization region, and trade efficiency and e-commerce. The International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO (ITC) extended its technical cooperation to include boosting the level of intra-regional trade. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), as the main regional commission dealing with our region, has been very active, both individually and in cooperation with other bodies and regional commissions of the United Nations system, in extending its cooperation with the Economic Cooperation Organization and its provision of technical assistance in areas such as the economic performance in the Economic Cooperation Organization region, strengthening subregional economic cooperation in trade and investment, development and establishment of an Economic Cooperation Organization network for trade and investment information exchange, and multi-modal transportation.

The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) is also assisting Economic Cooperation Organization efforts with regard to capacity-building in small and medium-size enterprises. Cooperation with the United Nations International Drug Control Programme has been expanding, and the first phase of the project to establish a Drug Control Coordination Unit in the

Economic Cooperation Organization secretariat, with the assistance of bilateral donors, was completed in December 2000, with the objective of increasing coordination and collaboration among member States of the Economic Cooperation Organization in the control of illicit drugs. We hope that the second phase of this project will begin according to the established timetable.

Although cooperation between the United Nations system and the Economic Cooperation Organization has been expanding, including in the new fields of activities, we believe that ample opportunities and unrealized potential exist for further expansion. We are confident that new areas of cooperation can be jointly explored and operationalized with such other agencies as the United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations Development Fund for Women in the fight against narcotic drugs, as well as with UNESCO and the World Tourism Organization in the areas of cultural development and tourism.

I should also like to express my delegation's deep appreciation to the Secretary-General for the comprehensive and informative report entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference", contained in document A/56/398. The report provides evidence that the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference have been working in close cooperation in their common search for solutions to world crises in various areas, namely, international peace and security, peacekeeping efforts, disarmament, the right to self-determination and other fundamental human rights.

My delegation believes that deepening relations between the two organizations through high-level contacts, regular consultations and technical meetings could contribute to the promotion of the purposes and principles of the United Nations. The Charter of the United Nations encourages these activities through regional cooperation to promote the Organization's purposes and principles.

Obviously, joint efforts to resolve the continued crisis in Afghanistan are one of the priorities of the United Nations that figure prominently in the agenda of the OIC. The recent developments have paved the way for the realization of the long-held aspirations of the Afghan nation for the restoration of peace and security in the country, free from the scourge of war and foreign interference, as well as the formation of a broad-based and multi-ethnic Government. In this regard, the OIC member States have constantly stressed the prime role of the United Nations. The United Nations and the OIC need to cooperate with a view to mobilizing the resources required for the provision of humanitarian assistance as well as the reconstruction of Afghanistan.

The OIC has played a major role in promoting the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations. The OIC Ad-Hoc Committee on Dialogue among Civilizations, chaired by the Islamic Republic of Iran, held several meetings at United Nations Headquarters with other groups within the United Nations in 2000 and 2001 to negotiate and finalize the draft Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations.

Finally, thanks to a very constructive partnership on the part of regional groups, 106 Member States sponsored the draft resolution, which was adopted by consensus in the General Assembly on 9 November 2001.

My delegation believes that the importance and utility of the new paradigm of dialogue in the conduct of international relations is more evident today than when it was first initiated by President Khatami.

We are confident that draft resolution A/56/L.36, which will be introduced by the Ambassador of Mali, and draft resolution A/56/L.32, introduced by the Ambassador of Tajikistan, serve as the appropriate bases for promoting joint activities in 2002 that fall within the common purposes of these organizations, the goals of which are to ensure international cooperation in seeking solutions to international and regional economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems. I would like to recommend that the draft resolutions be adopted by consensus.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.

United Nations A/56/PV.78

General Assembly

Fifty-sixth session

Official Records

78th plenary meeting
Thursday, 6 December 2001, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Han Seung-soo ..... (Republic of Korea)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Kumalo (South Africa), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 21 (continued)

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations

(a) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System

Report of the Secretary-General (A/56/171)

(b) Cooperation between the United Nations and the International Organization of la Francophonie

Report of the Secretary-General (A/56/390)

Draft resolution (A/56/L.34)

(c) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe

Report of the Secretary-General (A/56/302)

Draft resolution (A/56/L.31)

(d) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference

Report of the Secretary-General (A/56/398)

Draft resolution (A/56/L.36)

(e) Cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States

Report of the Secretary-General (A/56/474)

Draft resolution (A/56/L.26)

(f) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Reports of the Secretary-General (A/55/996, A/56/449)

Draft resolution (A/56/L.35)

(g) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Community of Central African States

Report of the Secretary-General (A/56/301)

Draft resolution (A/56/L.25/Rev.1)

(h) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization

Report of the Secretary-General (A/56/122)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

01-67944 (E)

Draft resolution (A/56/L.32)

(i) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

Report of the Secretary-General (A/56/125)

(j) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity

Report of the Secretary-General (A/56/489)

Draft resolution (A/56/L.37)

(k) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (A/56/317)

Draft resolution (A/56/L.38)

(l) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (A/56/490)

Draft resolution (A/56/L.30)

(m) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum

Draft resolution (A/56/L.29)

The Acting President: I now call on the representative of Mali to introduce draft resolution A/56/L.36.

Mr. Ouane (Mali) (*spoke in French*): In reference to the item under consideration, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his exhaustive report contained in document A/56/398. In my capacity as president of the Group of Islamic States at the United Nations I would also like to welcome the continued strengthening of relations between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC).

In this respect, I have the honour to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/56/L.36. The draft resolution before the General Assembly recalls in its preambular part all the previous relevant General Assembly resolutions and emphasizes the importance of cooperation between the two organizations, including resolution 3369 (XXX) of 10 October 1975, in which the General Assembly decided to invite the OIC to participate in its sessions and work and in those of the Assembly's subsidiary organs in the capacity of observers.

The draft details the reasons for and advantages of cooperation between the organizations in their efforts to attain their common goals and objectives, such as those relating to international peace and security, economic and social development, self-determination, decolonization, disarmament and basic human rights.

In the operative part of the draft resolution, which has 15 paragraphs, the General Assembly takes note with satisfaction of the Secretary-General's report and also notes with satisfaction the active participation of the OIC in the actions undertaken by the United Nations to achieve its purposes and principles embodied in the Charter. The Assembly also requests that the United Nations and the OIC continue to cooperate in questions relating to international peace and security, disarmament, self-determination, decolonization, human rights and economic and social development. The Assembly also welcomes the efforts made by the United Nations and the OIC to strengthen cooperation between both organizations in the areas of common interests and to review the ways and means for enhancing the mechanisms of such cooperation. In the operative paragraphs, the Assembly also commends the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference for its continued cooperation in the field of peacemaking and preventive diplomacy and notes that both institutions continue to cooperate closely in the search for a peaceful and lasting settlement to the conflict in Afghanistan. The Assembly also welcomes the efforts of the secretariats of the two organizations to strengthen information exchange and their coordination and cooperation in areas of mutual interest in the political field and their ongoing consultations with a view to enhancing this

cooperation. The Assembly also welcomes the periodic high-level meetings between the secretariats of the United Nations and the OIC and between senior secretariat officials of both institutions, and encourages their participation in important meetings of the two organizations. The Assembly also recommends the convening of a general meeting of the representatives of the secretariats of the United Nations system and the OIC in 2002. It also recommends the convening a coordinating meeting in 2002 of focal points of the organizations and agencies of the United Nations, on the one hand, and its subsidiary organs and specialized and affiliated institutions of Organization of the Islamic Conference, on the other. The Assembly also encourages the specialized agencies and other bodies of the United Nations to cooperate all the more closely with the subsidiary organs and institutions of the OIC in the priority areas of interest of the United Nations and the OIC. The Assembly urges the United Nations and other organizations of the United Nations system to provide the OIC and its subsidiary organs with increased assistance, especially on the technical level, in order to enhance cooperation. The Assembly is grateful to the Secretary-General for what he has continued to do for strengthening cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and its institutions, on the one hand, and the Organization of the Islamic Conference and its subsidiary bodies, on the other, and to thus serve the common interests of the two organizations in the political, economic, social and cultural spheres. In this respect, it requests the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly at the fifty-seventh session.

These are the fundamental points of the current draft resolution. I am convinced that the Assembly will, as in the past, support the draft resolution contained in document A/56/L.36 — which I have the honour of introducing on behalf of the Group of Islamic States — and that, after review, it will adopt it unanimously.

Mr. Hønningstad (Norway): Let me express my delegation's satisfaction at seeing, for the first time this year, cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations as a single agenda item. This gives us the opportunity to be more efficient and have one debate in the General Assembly, but it also poses the problem that, in the interest of efficiency and time restraint, it is hard to comment on all the equally important sub-items on the agenda. This year I will therefore comment on the cooperation with the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).

The fact that Africa is still being ravaged by a number of armed conflicts, drought and continued underdevelopment underlines the great importance of strong and practical cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity. The OAU Summit held in Lusaka last July made the important decision to move ahead with the idea of transforming the OAU into an African Union. The new Secretary-General, Mr. Amara Essy, is now facing the formidable challenge of transforming the OAU into a well functioning organization that meets the huge aspirations created both by that decision and by the launching of the New African Initiative, which subsequently developed into the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Norway believes that United Nations assistance will be needed to achieve these ambitious plans. Strengthened cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU should further enhance the high ambitions for conflict prevention and resolution, good governance and democracy, as well as the economic and social development of the African nations, as envisaged in the NEPAD initiative.

The coordinated efforts of the United Nations and the OAU should be developed further. Many conflicts on the African continent remain unsolved and could benefit greatly from a joint United Nations-OAU effort. The new NEPAD initiative envisages African leaders taking the responsibility for peace and conflict prevention. With that strong commitment of African leaders to peace, the role of the United Nations should be a supportive one. Norway will continue to support the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution and calls for United Nations technical assistance and for staff exchange programmes with the OAU.

Norway would also like to mention the cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU in connection with the eradication of small arms and landmines. Norway urges the organizations to cooperate further to minimize the destruction caused by mines and small arms. The positive engagement by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in agreeing to a moratorium on the sale

and trafficking in small arms should serve as an example to others.

Norway commends the Secretary-General and the Chairman of the Organization of the Islamic Conference for their commitment to cooperation between the two organizations, and their efforts to extend that cooperation to new fields of common interest. Norway fully supports their search for solutions to global problems related to international peace and security, terrorism, disarmament, self-determination, de-colonization, fundamental human rights and economic and social development.

Norway would like to stress both the importance of freedom of religion and belief and the role that religious communities can play in promoting tolerance and understanding and in seeking solutions to conflicts. We welcome the strong statement made by Mr. Abdelouahed Belkeziz, the Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference after the terrorist attacks on the United States. He reaffirmed the organization's position and strongly condemned the terrorist attacks. Mr. Belkeziz stated that such acts are diametrically opposed to the religion of Islam and its teachings.

Through its broad regional influence, the Organization of the Islamic Conference is a vital partner for the United Nations. In our view, this cooperation is crucial in order to break the vicious cycle of war, terror and misery in Afghanistan. It is vital that the OIC supports efforts to find a political solution through a broad-based Government that includes representatives from all major groups. The future of Afghanistan must be placed firmly in the hands of the Afghan people themselves.

We encourage the two organizations to continue strengthening cooperation in the field of peace-making and preventive diplomacy. There is a need for a common vision of the reconstruction of Afghanistan in a regional context. Steps must be taken in consultation with Afghanistan's neighbouring countries. We believe that the OIC could play a major role in reaching a long-term solution that is acceptable in the region.

An important aspect of the relationship between the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the United Nations is cooperation in the field. Today well-functioning field cooperation has been established in many areas of conflict and instability in the OSCE region. This is clearly demonstrated in Kosovo. Within the framework of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), the OSCE has the responsibility for institution building and democratization, fields that are within the core activities of the OSCE. This division of labour, based on the comparative advantages of the respective organizations, ensures that resources are used in a cost-effective way. Similar cooperation arrangements based on division of responsibility have existed in other areas.

The joint efforts of the international community during the recent crisis in The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia serve as yet another positive example. In Macedonia, the European Union, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the OSCE and the United Nations have coordinated their efforts to achieve a negotiated and peaceful settlement of the conflict. All the organizations play vital roles in the implementation of the Framework Agreement in The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and continued coordination is of the utmost importance.

Following the 11 September terrorist attacks, cooperation in Central Asia is particularly important. In recent years, the OSCE has established offices in all five republics. A number of United Nations agencies also have well-established programmes in those countries. We should therefore look for ways of enhancing coordination and identify areas where synergy can be achieved, and thereby maximize the impact of the efforts of the international community.

The OSCE will continue to be an essential partner for the United Nations in the years to come, working hand in hand with the United Nations in laying the foundation for economic and social development and in easing the burden of the world Organization in conflict prevention and conflict management in the OSCE area.

Norway has closely followed the cooperation that has developed between the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the United Nations since the original cooperation agreement between the two organizations was signed in 1996. We have seen that the cooperation has expanded substantially during these years, with emphasis on core issues like peace and security, international law and human rights, democracy, gender issues and economic and social development. Today, international organizations recognize the benefit of developing a parliamentary dimension. We are convinced that national parliaments should be a cornerstone of such a

dimension. There is a need for more direct engagement of parliaments in the substantive issues addressed at the United Nations.

Thus, we believe there is untapped political potential in the cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU. For that reason, we welcome the Secretary-General's report (A/55/996), which proposes specific steps for achieving closer cooperation between the two organizations. We fully support the recommendation in his report that the IPU be given a standing invitation to speak and the right to circulate documents at the United Nations.

We regret that it has not been possible to adopt a draft resolution incorporating these recommendations at this session. However, having noted the overwhelming support in principle during the debate in the Sixth Committee for granting observer status to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, we suggest that we focus on next year's session. Then we will have a new chance to take this important step forward and confirm our commitment to enhancing cooperation between the United Nations and IPU by granting the Inter-Parliamentary Union both observer status and the right to circulate documents.

Mr. Jabar (Malaysia): At the outset, my delegation wishes to convey its appreciation to the President of the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session, His Excellency Mr. Harri Holkeri, for his commendable proposal to cluster the items on cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations; this was a significant step in streamlining the agenda of the General Assembly. The decision taken by the General Assembly last year to cluster those items will certainly contribute to revitalizing the Assembly's working methods and to improving its efficiency. It is our fervent hope that such efforts will continue under the able stewardship of the current President, His Excellency Mr. Han Seung-soo.

In our deliberations on item 21, my delegation wishes to give special attention to the strengthening of cooperation between the United Nations and three regional or other organizations, namely the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the Pacific Islands Forum.

My delegation is pleased to note that the Secretary-General, in his report contained in document A/56/398, indicates a deepening of relations and cooperation between the United Nations and the OIC through high-level contacts, regular consultations and technical meetings. My delegation is also pleased to note that the Secretary-General's report this year is more substantive and focused in its content. We hope that future reports will contain suggestions on how cooperation could be further developed and consolidated between the two organizations. Both organizations must continue to explore new dimensions of cooperation in the field of peace and security as well as in other fields. The continued consultations on political matters, especially concerning ongoing peacemaking efforts in the conflict in Afghanistan and in the Middle East peace process, have become an important dimension in the cooperation between the United Nations and the OIC.

The OIC, founded 32 years ago, was intended not only to strengthen unity and solidarity within the Islamic *umma* — or community — but also to forge greater cooperation among its members, encompassing all areas. The OIC fraternity covers a vast geographical area and a large population dispersed all over the world. It represents a rich diversity of cultures and political systems that share the common heritage of Islam. With the active support of its members, the OIC has been able to fulfil its role as an important international institution serving the cause of global peace and security and striving to work for a better future for the Muslim community and for humanity as a whole.

The OIC has amply demonstrated that it is an instrument in the service of peace, development and solidarity among the world's peoples. We are gratified that the Secretary-General has acknowledged the positive role played by the OIC and has long considered the organization to be an important partner of the United Nations. The States members of the OIC firmly believe that the United Nations is well placed to bridge the gap between the Islamic countries and the rest of the international community through its mechanisms of dialogue and cooperation.

The report goes on to note that the OIC has participated actively in meetings of the United Nations and its subsidiary organs and has entered into cooperation agreements with various United Nations subsidiary organs. It is our hope that a memorandum of understanding to promote collaboration between the World Food Programme on the one hand and the OIC and its affiliated organizations on the other will soon

be formalized. We are gratified that both the United Nations and the OIC continue to strengthen their cooperation, in view of the increasingly important role played by the OIC in the international arena, in particular with respect to the implementation of the objectives of the United Nations in the areas of peace and security, decolonization, human rights, economic development and technical cooperation.

My delegation notes with satisfaction the increasing number of cooperative arrangements between the United Nations system and the OIC and its specialized and affiliated institutions. The report of the Secretary-General has provided very useful information on the level and extent of cooperation between various United Nations agencies and some of the specialized and affiliated institutions of the OIC. Since the signing of a cooperation agreement between the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the OIC in 1983, those two organizations have established close working relations through continued exchange of information and documents and regular consultations to promote joint cooperation programmes in the field of agriculture and rural development.

The convening this year at Cairo of an informal meeting between the Islamic Development Bank and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development to consider the long-term development needs of the Palestinian economy was commendable, and we earnestly hope that the recommendations made there will be fully implemented.

We are also pleased to note that the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the OIC, through the Islamic Development Bank and the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries, have focused their efforts on food security and rural development, training in agricultural policy analysis, trade in agricultural products, national capacity-building, promotion of agricultural production, protection of the environment and promotion of rural communities. A series of workshops and seminars on agricultural and other related issues has also been jointly organized. Malaysia supports those activities, along with others which both the United Nations and the OIC have identified.

My delegation notes that cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU has existed since 1947, when the IPU was granted non-governmental-organization consultative status with the Economic and Social Council. That cooperation was further strengthened with the signing of the cooperation agreement between the United Nations and the IPU in 1996. The Secretary-General's report, contained in document A/56/449, has outlined in detail the level of cooperation and the various activities undertaken by the two organizations in the areas of peace and security, economic and social development, international law and human rights, democracy, governance and gender issues. There is a tremendous wealth of experience, knowledge and organizational support that the IPU could offer in that regard.

The IPU is a unique inter-State organization of national parliaments. The current non-governmental-organization status accorded to the IPU has very limited privileges, denying the IPU the opportunity to contribute more effectively and systematically to the United Nations. The General Assembly should recognize and acknowledge the important contribution of the IPU to the work of the General Assembly. It is only fitting that the IPU should be allowed to participate in the work and activities of the General Assembly and its subsidiary bodies. My delegation strongly believes that the IPU should be granted observer status in the General Assembly in order for there to be a more meaningful and productive relationship between the United Nations and the IPU.

My delegation welcomes the inclusion of sub-item (m) of agenda item 21, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum", in the agenda of the General Assembly this year. My delegation supports the establishment of cooperation between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum, given the Forum's commitment to establishing global partnerships in the interest of world peace and prosperity for all peoples. We believe that the two organizations could play an equal role in complementing and supporting each other in implementing their obligations, consistent with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. It is therefore appropriate that such cooperation should be given equal importance by the United Nations.

As a dialogue partner of the Forum since 1997, Malaysia will continue to extend its technical assistance through the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme to assist small and developing island States. To date, 698 participants from among Forum member States have taken various short-term and medium-term courses in Malaysia. Beginning next

year, the programme will be extended to participants from the Marshall Islands, Palau and the Federated States of Micronesia. We hope that this modest contribution will further enhance our cooperation with States members of the Forum and will contribute to strengthening the cooperation between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum.

In conclusion, my delegation hopes that draft resolutions A/56/L.36, A/56/L.35 and A/56/L.29 will receive the full support of the Assembly and will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Malofeev (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The delegation of the Republic of Belarus attaches particular importance to the Assembly's debate on cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations. In today's special international circumstances, the consolidation of United Nations global efforts and those of various regional arrangements has taken on particular significance. Although nearly three months has passed since the terrorist attacks against New York and Washington, D.C., those attacks are still perceived as a monstrous crime against the people of the United States and against the whole of humanity. That is why regional arrangements, as stipulated in the Charter, should assist the United Nations in resolving matters relating to the maintenance of international peace and security on the regional level.

As a member of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Belarus and a national representative to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), I would like to address issues of cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

Today we observe actively growing mutual understanding between the two organizations. Every year the IPU organizes meetings of high-level United Nations officials and parliamentarians who are members of national delegations participating in the sessions of the General Assembly in order to discuss major United Nations initiatives and programmes. The Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments which took place last fall at United Nations Headquarters and which adopted a final declaration was an extremely significant and memorable event. The declaration stressed the need for strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and national parliaments in various areas through the structures of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. It is worth mentioning that over the past year the Inter-Parliamentary Union has adopted a number of resolutions and implemented a number of measures to support the United Nations. IPU leaders Ms. Najma Heptulla and Mr. Anders Johnsson have made an important contribution to that end.

Today's discussion will further contribute to the development of the relationship between the United Nations and the IPU, for which the necessary conditions are being established. The Union is undergoing a process of reform. Several decisions related to the reform of the IPU have been adopted in order to strengthen the Union and its relationships with national parliaments.

We are convinced that inviting the IPU to participate in the work of the General Assembly, as recommended by the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, in his report of 26 June 2001 (A/55/996), would be an important landmark in strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and IPU. Belarus hopes that a draft resolution to that effect will be adopted upon the completion of negotiations on the text.

In developing cooperation with the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus attaches great importance to the establishment of stable relations with the parliamentary structures of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Council of Europe. Exchanges of views with representatives of those organizations have been intensified. There are ongoing discussions on the most important issues relevant to our relations. We consider such dialogue to be important for the full integration of the parliamentary structures of the National Assembly of Belarus, whose members were democratically elected in 2000, into the European parliamentary system.

Now, I wish to say a few words about some issues of common concern. Unfortunately, mankind has entered the new millennium having inherited a heavy burden of serious problems. One of them is terrorism in its various forms and manifestations, which has become a clear threat to international security. Sadly, the geography of terrorist acts is expanding as well.

Thinking back to the crimes committed against the people of the United States on 11 September, crimes that shocked the world, I would like to observe that the people of Belarus, along with the rest of the

civilized world, learned with profound sorrow and indignation the news of those terrible crimes, which were of a kind that the world had never before experienced. The Republic of Belarus expressed its deepest condolences to the people of the United States and to all countries which lost citizens as a result of the tragedy.

The success of the international community's efforts to eliminate the root causes of terrorism depends, first of all, on the coordination and consolidation of the efforts of all States. The United Nations has now become the focal point for global efforts to eradicate this evil. We believe that the Organization should play a special role in developing the international community's strategy and tactics in the fight against terrorism.

The National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus has never relaxed its attention with respect to setting up a reliable domestic legislative shield for countering terrorism. Suffice it to say that on 1 October 2001 the Republic of Belarus deposited at United Nations Headquarters its instrument of ratification of the International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings of 15 December 1997, which had been ratified earlier by the Belarus Parliament. Belarus became the twenty-eighth State party to that Convention. In the course of the current session, Belarus signed the last of the 12 international conventions on terrorism, the Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism. The National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus intends to ratify that document in the near future.

Consideration of draft legislation on fighting terrorism, submitted on the initiative of the President of the Republic of Belarus, has become an important focus of the activities of Belarus parliamentarians. It is evident that all branches of power in Belarus are determined to fight all manifestations of terrorist activity. We intend to continue intensive work in that area.

Today, unity, solidarity, determination and steadfast action are the international community's trump cards in fighting terrorism. As one of the countries that suffered terribly from the horrors and deprivations of the last world war, the Republic of Belarus also endorses the views of many other nations on the unacceptability of transferring blame and responsibility from individual persons and groups of people to entire peoples and States. However military action may now develop, thousands of inhabitants of poor and underdeveloped countries will become its first victims. That is why today as never before politicians should be extremely balanced and sober in taking decisions on the use of military force. We are all responsible before humankind for preserving global peace and stability and for preventing a new world war.

Our country has also contributed to the cause of disarmament and the preservation of universal peace. We are against the development of new weapons systems, especially those of a global nature. The Republic of Belarus has voluntarily renounced its status as a nuclear nation and has withdrawn all nuclear weapons from its territory. A few years ago Belarus proposed the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central and Eastern Europe and an agreement not to deploy nuclear weapons in countries where they are not deployed at present. We believe that in the near future, if not today, the majority of European nations will support those initiatives.

Speaking here today as a representative of the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus and as a member of the delegation of Belarus at the current session, I would like to assure Member States and the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, of our continued adherence to the principles of constructive partnership with the United Nations and with regional structures in the name of the noble goal of ensuring international peace and security and strengthening the well-being of all our peoples.

Mr. Boisson (Monaco) (*spoke in French*): This year, the Government of the Principality has decided to focus its statement on the cooperation between the United Nations and the International Organization of la Francophonie (OIF), because this cooperation covers an increasing number of areas in a spirit of exemplary complementarity and coordination.

Undoubtedly, the fact that the Secretary-General of the OIF was formerly our Secretary-General at the United Nations certainly contributes to this spirit and to the harmony in reflection, discussion and action between both organizations.

The delegation of the Principality of Monaco, which is a member of the OIF, took note of the report of the Secretary-General, a very precise and broad-ranging report on the cooperation between the United

Nations and the International Organization of la Francophonie, with growing interest as we read it.

Over the past two years, since the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 54/25 on 15 November 1999, the consultations between both inter-governmental institutions have increased not only in number but also, and above all, in quality. My initial reaction is therefore to express my satisfaction and warm congratulations to the Secretaries-General of both organizations and the officials and staff responsible for carrying out this cooperation, both in New York, at the headquarters of the OIF in Paris and also, of course, within the member States, where these joint efforts actually take place. Whether they concern preventive diplomacy and the consolidation of peace or the promotion of human rights and economic, social and cultural development, these enterprises and actions have taken on a new and dynamic dimension that is both appreciable and appreciated.

Since the eighth Summit of Heads of State and Government of Countries Using French as a Common Language, held in September 1999 in Moncton, Canada, the dimension and political role of the International Organization of la Francophonie have undoubtedly expanded. Its actions, particularly in Africa, have been undertaken with competence and determination. We welcome this fact, because the consequences have been useful and beneficial.

The cooperation between the two organizations with regard to electoral assistance and support for democracy also seems very encouraging. Thanks to their coordination, their complementarity is excellent. The measures aimed at increasing this cooperation, developed during the meetings of senior officials of the two departments concerned on 5-6 March 2001, should undoubtedly allow the strengthening of that complementarity while increasing the number of effective or potential initiatives.

In the economic, social and cultural spheres, areas in which the OIF and its executive agency have long experience and high qualifications, the OIF has been developing a sound partnership with the United Nations and its specialized institutions, including the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), that benefits the member States of both organizations. The decisions and implementation of the action plans of the recent world conferences, and the special sessions of the General Assembly, in which the International Organization of la Francophonie took part, indicate the common will of both institutions to act together and in a concrete way to face the challenges of our world, primarily those of violence, poverty and ignorance.

I would also like to emphasize the very successful joint initiatives and measures undertaken by both international entities in the spheres of information and communication. The use of electronic communication was, in particular, the subject of joint training sessions organized in October 2000 and April 2001. This was a very positive initiative. Likewise, the cooperation undertaken by the United Nations Institute for Training and Research and the Agency of La Francophonie, in the form of joint training programmes for international civil servants with regard to the implementation of environmental legislation in the form of distance learning programmes, are excellent examples that should certainly be encouraged.

Finally, the pragmatic, effective approach that seems to inspire cooperation between both organizations in specific areas of international action in which they are both involved appears to us to be essential more than ever today We cannot but hope for their strengthening and further development, as called for in the draft resolution co-sponsored by the Principality of Monaco and ably presented by the representative of Lebanon, a country that next year will host the Summit of La Francophonie. We sincerely hope that this text will enjoy the broadest possible support of the international community, because, beyond the linguistic cooperation that it symbolizes, it may inspire and serve as a model for inter-institutional cooperation that is now being planned or is in the process of being reviewed with a view to renewing inter-relations and working methods.

I would like to note with satisfaction the meeting in December in Lisbon, Portugal, attended by the Secretaries-General and Executive Secretaries of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries, the Latin Union, the Organization of Ibero-American States for Education, Science and Culture and, of course, the International Organization of la Francophonie.

I would also like to take this opportunity to extend my best wishes to the Secretary-General of the OIF, His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, and

express our appreciation for his dedication and commitment.

These institutions bring together 79 Governments and represent 1.2 billion men and women on the five continents. They have indicated a strong willingness to cooperate in essential disciplines such as new technologies and language education, with a view to promoting cultural diversity and multi-lingualism.

Ms. Garcia (Philippines): This session's consideration of the sub-item on cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) is of particular importance as we consider the adoption of a draft resolution that calls for a decision to be taken at the fifty-seventh session on the modalities for a new and strengthened relationship between these two organizations. It is my delegation's hope that our discussion this year will serve as a useful input to next session's deliberations.

My delegation has long valued the relationship between the United Nations and the IPU as an important element in promoting multilateral diplomacy. For many of us, diplomacy will be greatly enhanced if our legislative branches have greater input in promoting international cooperation through the United Nations, as well as a role in cultivating a greater understanding among Governments and peoples.

An item of particular significance is that the IPU can channel to the United Nations more diverse views, such as those expressed in parliamentary debates and discussions at the IPU. In addition, it can play a significant role in promoting parliamentary awareness and action in support of our work at the United Nations, as well as provide support for parliaments, with the aim of increasing their capacity to fulfil their legislative and oversight functions in matters that are subject to international cooperation at the United Nations. Through its close cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme, the IPU can also continue to contribute to the promotion and development of representative institutions of democracy, as well as offer a parliamentary perspective on developmental matters.

The importance of the continued and strengthened relationship between the United Nations and the IPU was clearly recognized last year. At the conclusion of the first-ever Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments, held immediately prior to the Millennium Summit, the Parliamentarians, through their Declaration entitled "Parliamentary vision for international cooperation at the dawn of the third millennium", pledged their commitment to international cooperation with the United Nations. Subsequently, the various heads of State and Government, through the Millennium Declaration, resolved to strengthen further cooperation in various fields between the United Nations and national parliaments through the IPU.

More recently, my delegation notes the significance of the observation contained in the IPU Council report of April 2001 suggesting that the relationship between the IPU and the United Nations should bring a parliamentary dimension to the United Nations and permit the United Nations to cooperate with parliaments through the IPU.

My delegation thus welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union and his recommendations on the modalities for strengthening this relationship. My delegation is confident that at the next session of the General Assembly we can agree on specific modalities enabling the IPU to contribute its valuable and important experience to the work of the United Nations, especially the General Assembly.

The Philippine executive and parliamentary branches enjoy a close relationship in the field of multilateral diplomacy, particularly on issues addressed by the United Nations. Indeed, our delegations to the regular sessions of the General Assembly always include a significant number of legislators. Philippine parliamentarians also constitute part of our delegations to international meetings and conferences. Most recently, a Philippine Senator headed our delegation to the General Assembly's special session on the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda.

It is in this context that the Philippines will continue to support efforts to bring about a new and strengthened relationship between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

Mr. Davis (United Kingdom): Last year, at the Millennium Summit, our leaders pledged unanimously to work together to make our world more peaceful, more prosperous and more just. That is an enormous challenge. While the United Nations, the most universal and most representative organization in the world, is ideally suited to play the central role in rising

to that challenge, it needs all the help it can get. That is why cooperation with regional and other organizations is so vitally important to the work of the United Nations.

In that regard, the United Kingdom fully supports the contribution made this morning by the representative of Belgium on behalf of the European Union. We are also glad to have an opportunity to support the Secretary-General's recommendation that the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) be granted observer status here at the United Nations. We very much hope that next year the procedures can be properly followed to allow action to be taken to achieve that goal.

The United Kingdom also welcomes the report published by the Secretary-General in August in response to the resolution adopted by the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session about cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe. I would, however, like to add a few words of my own, in my capacity as leader of the United Kingdom delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, and a Vice-President of that Assembly.

It is exactly 50 years since the Council of Europe signed an agreement of cooperation with the United Nations. Much has been done in the meantime, but I should like to highlight a number of areas of cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe during the past year.

First, following the monstrous events of 11 September, the Council of Europe has shown its determination to fully contribute to the international action against terrorism. The United Nations, of course, has a pivotal role. But the Council of Europe's contribution will support and sustain, where appropriate, and with other multilateral forums, the international strategy to combat terrorism. In that campaign we will make full use of our own special assets, in particular our conventions, our legal instruments and, with a total of 43 member States, our pan-European character.

Secondly, I should mention the Council of Europe's contribution to United Nations activities in Kosovo. We have continued to help the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) in matters of legislation and reform, especially in legal and judicial areas, and with a particular focus on human rights. The cooperation between the two organizations culminated in November with the elections to the new Kosovo Assembly. At the request of the United Nations, we provided a mission for the observation of the electoral process, in which Council of Europe parliamentarians participated. The fact that the operation was so successful serves to highlight once again the value of cooperation between the United Nations and the various regional and other institutions.

In Bosnia, too, the Council of Europe has worked with the United Nations to play an important practical role, once again particularly on human rights issues. Our legal experts have worked with the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina on, among other things, human rights legislation and prison reform. The two organizations are working together to ensure that Bosnia and Herzegovina's own membership of the Council of Europe is not far away.

I should also mention the close cooperation that has developed between the Council of Europe and the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE). Following the accident in Romania, we are working with the United Nations ECE to look at the transboundary impact of industrial accidents in terms of water pollution, and we are also active in the "Environment for Europe" process.

During the last year, the Council of Europe was also active, through its European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, in preparations for the recent World Conference against Racism. We were entrusted with the preparation at European level, which included a successful European Conference against Racism. We are now focusing on a follow-up to both the European Conference and the World Conference.

Of course our North-South Centre based in Lisbon has continued to promote awareness among Europeans of the problems experienced elsewhere in the world. This is important because it shows that we in the Council of Europe are not concerned only with the affairs of our own continent. We recognize that we are part of one world, and we are not interested in developments only in neighbouring regions, such as the Maghreb and the Middle East, but in the world as a whole. In the Council of Europe, we stand ready to work with other regional organizations to fulfil the ideals of the United Nations.

Other delegations have referred to other organizations in their speeches, but our conclusion

seems to be the same: that the United Nations can only benefit from strong cooperation with regional organizations — a conclusion with which the United Kingdom wholeheartedly agrees.

Ms. Ndhlovu (South Africa): The Secretary-General's report on Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) makes many important observations and recommendations. My delegation has taken note of the report and believes that this report is useful, because it can only lead to stronger cooperation between the two organizations. We thank him most sincerely for his tireless efforts in advancing the cause of the developing world, especially Africa.

My delegation also wishes to congratulate the President on his leadership. We have no doubt that, under his stewardship, the affairs of the Assembly will be conducted in a commendable manner.

At the dawn of this new millennium, Africa has responded to the call for a continental sustainable development plan. This response has come at the right moment, when the continent is poised for a renaissance, both at the institutional level, symbolized by the soon-to-be-launched Africa Union, and at the social, economic and developmental level, epitomized by the New Partnership for Africa's Development. There is a symbiotic relationship between the two initiatives because the African Union will serve as the strategic mechanism to advance the objectives and programmes of the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

Africa also recognizes that it has to enter into partnership with the rest of the world to secure support for the rebirth of the continent. By strengthening its cooperation with the Organization of African Unity (OAU)/African Union, the United Nations will play a pivotal role in Africa's renewal. Both the Constitutive Act of the African Union and the New Partnership for Africa's Development complement the Millennium Declaration, by which Member States of this body committed themselves to responding to the special needs of Africa. The objectives of the Millennium Declaration and those of the New Partnership for Africa's Development are best captured by the Declaration issued by the heads of States and Government, which affirmed "our faith in the Organization and its Charter as indispensable foundations of a more peaceful, prosperous and just world." (*resolution 55/2, para. 1*)

Today we address this body with great hope and excitement, because there is a new dawn breaking in Africa. Africans have decided to shine the light of prosperity on themselves. We have arrived at the determination that human rights, democracy, peace, stability and justice are the fundamental building blocks of a prosperous continent. We seek to achieve sustainable development and economic growth by improving the conditions for economic renewal, as set out in the New Partnership for Africa's Development. The African-owned New Partnership for Africa's Development has set developmental goals, clear objectives, a road map and review mechanisms to ensure effective implementation and follow-up strategies for sustainable development programmes.

Since the entry into force of the Constitutive Act of the African Union, Africa has been looking forward to the next milestone and the defining moment of a new era of hope, prosperity and peace on the continent. We call for international support and assistance to establish the important organs of the African Union: the Pan-African Parliament; the Court of Justice; the Economic, Social and Technical Council; the African Commission on Peoples and Human Rights; and the Special Organ for Peace, Stability and Security.

The Constitutive Act of the African Union contains objectives that coincide with the goals of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, the content of the Millennium Declaration and the provisions of the United Nations Charter. The most important objectives of the African Union are to promote peace, security and stability on the continent; democratic principles and institutions, popular participation and good governance; sustainable development at the economic, social and cultural levels; and the integration of African economies.

Africa earnestly invites the international community to take part in a mutually beneficial partnership on the basis of what we as Africans have determined is the correct route to our sustainable development. This is a call for a new relationship between Africa and the international community, especially the highly industrialized countries. The continuous marginalization of the African continent, due to the process of globalization, has led to the widening of unequal relations within and between

countries. Experience shows that there is nothing inherent in the process of globalization that automatically reduces poverty and inequality. Africa is thus seeking a partnership that will ensure that it will play a role in the shaping of the form, content and the course of globalization, an international partnership that is characterized by fairness, justice, the promotion of social progress and better living standards. This is surely in line with the provisions of the United Nations Charter, which contains the minimum common denominator acceptable to all Member States. Africa is an indispensable global resource base on which this partnership should develop in order to benefit African people.

The Millennium Declaration has clearly spelled out the needs for concerted international cooperation in advancing Africa's development. The consensus reached at the Millennium Summit is to

> "support the consolidation of democracy in Africa and assist Africans in their struggle for lasting peace, poverty eradication and sustainable development, thereby bringing Africa into the mainstream of the world economy." (*ibid., para. 27*)

Through cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity/African Union, Africa calls upon the international community to assist in the efforts aimed at halving poverty by 2015; to achieve the agreed target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product for official development assistance; to assist in debt reduction and debt forgiveness; to increase private capital flows and investments into Africa; to support the reform of multilateral financial institutions to better cater for the needs and concerns of African countries; and to increase access for African products to the markets of developed countries.

Africa has embarked upon the extraordinary measures represented by the Africa Union and the New Partnership for Africa's Development because we have an urgent need to eradicate poverty and address the destructive historical effects arising from a legacy of colonialism, war, conflict and disease. We invite the international community to join us as we implement these initiatives that lay the groundwork for a prosperous Africa that will triumph over the ills of poverty, disease, underdevelopment and despair. Their success is dependent on an effective partnership between government and people, along with the cooperation of the private sector and a true partnership with the developed nations that also have Africa's interest at heart. We welcome the initiatives aimed at assisting Africa to meet the challenges of achieving sustainable development, such as the G-8 special task force that will work together with the African Steering Committee and the African Union secretariat.

A lot of ground has been covered within the United Nations to promote cooperation with the OAU/African Union. The sessions of the Economic and Social Council in Geneva this year were exclusively devoted to the theme of promoting international cooperation to promote sustainable development in Africa. The United Nations maintains a liaison office with the OAU in Addis Ababa. We are of the view that if that office could be strengthened, the United Nations would better be able to achieve its stated intentions in Africa. The Economic Commission for Africa continues to play an important role in coordinating and facilitating cooperation between the two bodies at the economic level.

In conclusion, my delegation looks forward to the review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADF) over the next few months. This should deliver useful lessons to be learned from the past 10 years. We should build the future relationship between the United Nations and the OAU/African Union on these lessons learned. We will actively participate in that process, especially in designing a post-UN-NADAF relationship that takes cognizance of the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

Mr. Vámos-Goldman (Canada): I am here to speak on behalf of the Canadian Government in support of the draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). Canada has been a sponsor of draft resolutions submitted under this agenda item over the past several years, and we are pleased to be a sponsor again this year.

I would also like to acknowledge the presence in the Hall of the President of the Canadian Inter-Parliamentary Group, and a member of the World Executive of the IPU, Senator Sheila Finestone.

Just over a year ago, during the historic week of the Millennium Summit, the Inter-Parliamentary Union worked closely with the United Nations to convene a Conference of Presiding Officers of National

Parliaments at United Nations Headquarters. The objective was to provide a forum for debating major challenges on the global agenda through the lens of the parliamentary perspective, reflected in the statements and viewpoints of some 145 presiding officers of national parliaments from different regions of the world.

In their statements at the Conference, the speakers of the Senate and of the House of Commons of Canada emphasized the importance of a dynamic and strengthened relationship between the IPU and the United Nations — the former the longest lasting, the latter the pre-eminent international organization in the world. While the United Nations prepared to enter its second century, the IPU was, in fact, about to enter its third, having held its first Conference in Paris in 1889.

(*spoke in French*)

The Declaration of the Conference of Presiding Officers clearly underlined the support that the IPU can bring to bear not only in relation to the purposes and principles of the United Nations, but also in highlighting the role of the parliamentary community in developing multilateral cooperation by Governments through the United Nations system — both on emerging issues such as terrorism and HIV/AIDS, as well as on such long-standing matters as disarmament, human rights, equality between men and women, democracy, the rule of law, the protection of civilians in armed conflict, sustainable development and poverty eradication.

Canada supports such measures, as well as related initiatives aimed at making a greater contribution to the United Nations, pursuant to such instruments as the cooperation agreement signed in 1996; the Millennium Declaration, adopted by heads of State and Government in 2000, which indicated their strong desire to strengthen further the cooperation between the United Nations and national parliaments through their world organization, the IPU; and most recently, the Secretary-General's report of 26 June, recommending that the General Assembly should grant the IPU a standing invitation to participate as it wishes in the sessions and work of the General Assembly.

(*spoke in English*)

The Secretary-General was more direct in his welcoming address to parliamentarians on 4 December, declaring that the parliamentary voice — the voice of the people — must be an integral component of the work of the United Nations. Canada wholeheartedly supports Secretary-General Annan's affirmation of his commitment to strengthening the parliamentary dimension of the Organization's activities. An integral proof of this is the recommendation that the General Assembly grant the IPU observer status. Canada believes that the IPU would make a valuable contribution in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly, its subsidiary organs and the national conferences convened under the auspices of the United Nations.

Canada shares the view of the Secretary-General that the IPU should be granted observer status. We believe that this view also enjoys broad support among Member States. Canada looks forward to an early, positive decision on this matter at the fifty-seventh session.

Mr. Behrendt (Germany): It is a great honour for me as a parliamentarian to be given an opportunity to address this body on the issue of getting members of parliaments more strongly involved in the activities of the United Nations. I would like to stress how important it is from my point of view to develop closer cooperation between the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), the only world organization for parliaments, on the one hand, and the United Nations on the other. Parliaments express the voices of nations and thus contribute to the democratization of international decision-making processes.

The United Nations has recognized the importance of such cooperation for making its work more effective. It is only if the resolutions adopted by national Governments at the level of the United Nations are implemented by national parliaments in the form of specific legislation that our common struggle for the development of all nations of the world and our efforts to promote human rights and democracy will have any chance of succeeding. That conviction was expressed in the Millennium Declaration last year. And it is only if the people we parliamentarians represent become convinced that nothing is decided over their heads, but rather that their elected representatives are able to provide a check on government action, that they will gladly comply with the legislative requirements that come their way.

The reports of the Secretary-General on cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-

Parliamentary Union (A/55/996 and A/56/449) breathe life into the idea of closer cooperation with the Inter-Parliamentary Union and make specific proposals with regard to the future nature of our relationship. The German delegation to the Inter-Parliamentary Union welcomes the reports as a good point of departure for deepening the relations between the two organizations. I would be greatly pleased if a consensus could be reached at the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly on granting observer status in the Assembly to the Inter-Parliamentary Union. That would be an important step in the right direction. We look forward to participating in further consultations on this subject in the months ahead.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union has already concluded important cooperation agreements with specialized agencies of the United Nations. Together with the United Nations Development Programme, the Inter-Parliamentary Union implements programmes aimed at strengthening national parliaments. With the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Labour Organization, the Inter-Parliamentary Union has cooperated in compiling manuals with a view to increasing awareness among parliamentarians of the obligations deriving from international humanitarian law and refugee law. After all, we are the ones who, in the final analysis, implement those international obligations on the basis of corresponding national legislation and budget allocations.

This fruitful cooperation should definitely be continued, and it should be expanded further.

In our cooperation we are also able to fall back on experience accumulated in regional parliamentary assemblies such as the European Parliament, the Andean Parliament, the Latin American Parliament and the Council of Europe. For more than 10 years, the Council of Europe has had observer status and has availed itself of that status to engage in cooperation in numerous areas. The Lithuanian presidency submitted an excellent draft resolution that deserves everyone's support. It makes reference to joint efforts in areas that are of concern to all of us. Those areas include: the fight against racism and xenophobia, social development, the fight against terrorism, and activities on the ground in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Kosovo.

As one of the Vice-Presidents of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly, I am pleased that parliamentarians have been and continue to be involved in shaping the cooperation that takes place between the two organizations, for instance in monitoring the elections that have taken place in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Kosovo. The Council of Europe is able to make a substantial contribution towards the prevention of conflicts. For that reason it is worthwhile to continue to expand the current cooperation between the Council of Europe and the United Nations with a view to making better use of existing resources and avoiding overlaps in our activities. Therefore, I support the appeal being made to the Secretary-General to join Council of Europe leaders in sounding out the possibilities for further expanding our relations, for improving information exchange and for strengthening coordination between the United Nations and the Council of Europe.

Mr. Krokhmal (Ukraine): It is with great pleasure that my delegation takes part in the debate on the agenda item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations". In recent years, the international community has faced an increased need to intensify interaction between the United Nations and regional and other organizations.

Like other Member States, Ukraine attaches great importance to cooperation between the United Nations and other international organizations. We firmly believe that the United Nations continues to make considerable progress in ensuring that its relationships with regional organizations are mutually beneficial. That has been most evident in the strengthening of the leading role of the United Nations in global affairs. We believe that close ties with regional structures that reflect the political, economic and cultural diversity of the planet are a tool of vital importance that can help preserve and promote the unique international status of the United Nations.

In the light of overriding common concerns, it is only appropriate that we join forces to pursue our common objectives. In that regard, my delegation strongly supports the strategies for moving forward outlined in the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Road map towards the implementation of the Millennium Declaration" (A/56/326).

Today let me highlight a few points which are of particular importance for my delegation. Ukraine is

following carefully the development of cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). The IPU helps in a significant way to intensify dialogue among societies and nations on pressing issues of international peace and security, human rights, the environment and economic and social development, and thus makes a substantial contribution to attaining the objectives of the United Nations.

Ukraine has been a strong supporter of draft resolutions on this sub-item because we strongly believe that the two organizations share a joint mission to make prosperity, peace and democracy the real universal values of the twenty-first century. We are grateful to the delegation of India for the introduction of draft resolution A/56/L.35, and we hope it will be adopted by consensus.

Cooperation between the United Nations and Euro-Atlantic structures is another crucial issue. Ukraine warmly welcomes the further development of ties between the United Nations and the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. We believe that cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe can be strengthened through joint efforts to formulate comprehensive strategies for conflict prevention on the basis of the wide use of preventive diplomacy and peace-building in both European and worldwide contexts. We believe that implementing that idea would be in broad consonance with the proposal to develop a comprehensive United Nations strategy for conflict prevention put forward last year by the President of Ukraine, Leonid Kuchma, at the Millennium Summit and at the Security Council summit.

Ukraine fully supports the strengthening of cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe and believes that that regional organization can significantly contribute to the work of the United Nations. The Council of Europe plays an important role in promoting democracy, human rights and the rule of law in Europe. Without imposing its views and values on the wider United Nations membership, it can comprehensively share Europe's experience with the United Nations, thus further enhancing the capacity of the United Nations to resolve some of the most pressing global challenges of the new century.

From our standpoint, draft resolution A/56/L.31, on cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe, contains all the necessary elements that form the basis for increased interaction between the two organizations. Ukraine will actively support all endeavours leading to the implementation of its main purposes.

Let me also welcome further enhancement of cooperation between the United Nations and the International Organization of la Francophonie. We strongly support the intention to intensify that dialogue, which yields important and valuable results. My delegation is pleased to be among the sponsors of draft resolution A/56/L.34 on this matter and calls upon all Member States to support it.

Mr. Marschik (Austria): Austria welcomes this first debate on cooperation between the United Nations and a number of regional and other organizations under a single clustered agenda item. This is a visible and effective measure towards the revitalization of the General Assembly. We are confident that the success of this innovation will make possible further initiatives with the same objective.

As regards the issue at hand, Austria can refer to the statement by the presidency of the European Union on behalf of the Union's members and associated States. Due to the interest and special responsibilities that Austria currently has in regard to certain organizations, my delegation would like to make the following brief observations.

Currently a member of the Troika of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Austria fully supports the statement of the Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE, the Romanian Foreign Minister. My delegation would like to congratulate Romania on a successful year at the helm of that important organization. Austria shouldered that responsibility last year, and we know well the many challenges that come with that function.

The OSCE is an excellent example of the multitude of ways in which a regional organization can cooperate with the United Nations — and with very impressive results, as we know. I would like to refer especially to the field missions of the two organizations, which are becoming increasingly efficient and successful in cooperating with each other on the ground.

The meeting of the Ministerial Council held in Bucharest at the beginning of this week paved the way for further cooperation between the OSCE and the United Nations. The adoption of the Bucharest Action Plan against terrorism requires close interaction between the organs of the OSCE and those of the United Nations, in particular the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention, whose headquarters is at Vienna. Austria is convinced that a decisive factor in our common efforts in combating terrorism is improved cooperation between international and regional organizations. My delegation is confident that the United Nations and the OSCE will fulfil our expectations in that regard.

As the host country for the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) Organization (CTBTO), Austria has assumed special responsibility for the successful preparation for the entry into force of the CTBT. In recent years much progress has been achieved, but some obstacles have emerged. The impressive number of signatures and ratifications underscores the almost universal support for the Treaty: 164 States have signed and 89 States have deposited their instruments of ratification. As we know, however, the Treaty has not entered into force because, unfortunately, 13 of the 44 States whose ratification is required have not signed or have not ratified it.

In that regard, my delegation wishes to thank the Secretary-General for having last month convened the second Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT. That event, held here in New York, convincingly reiterated the importance of nuclear non-proliferation and of its role in the framework of the United Nations. The success of the United Nations in this field relies on the inputs of all organizations involved. Austria therefore welcomes the excellent cooperation between the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO under its Executive Secretary, Ambassador Hoffmann, and the United Nations, cooperation which, as we know, was established by last year's relationship agreement between the Preparatory Commission and the United Nations. We hope that that cooperation will invigorate the discussion on the benefits of the worldwide verification regime provided for by the CTBT and will work as a catalyst to convince States of the importance and the utility of the CTBTO.

Permit me briefly to express Austria's appreciation of the excellent cooperation of the United Nations with the Council of Europe, an organization to which the Austrian Government and the Austrian people are especially committed. Over the years, the work of each organization has proved to have a significant influence on the work of the other. Most recently, the Sixth Committee's discussion on the cloning of humans for reproductive reasons provided a good example of how a regional initiative can be taken up at the global level.

In recent years we have also witnessed increasing cooperation on a variety of specific issues, as for example with regard to the protection of children, the monitoring of elections, the fight against terrorism and the International Criminal Court. Austria is confident that Member States will continue to support the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan, and the Secretary General of Council of Europe, Mr. Walter Schwimmer, in their efforts to intensify the dialogue between the two organizations.

The debate today reveals once more the significant benefits that can be derived from close cooperation and interaction between the United Nations and other organizations. Global problems require both a global response and specific regional responses. At the same time, regional issues often have a global dimension. Consequently, there is an urgent need for an improved inter-organizational dialogue in policy-making, as well as for enhanced cooperation in operations. We are confident that our debate today will be another contribution towards improved cooperation in the future.

Mr. Bergqvist (Sweden): First of all, speaking on behalf of the Government of Sweden, I would like to fully associate myself with the statement delivered by the presidency of the European Union.

As a member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, I will focus on the cooperation between the Council of Europe and the United Nations.

On Saturday next week, it will be exactly 50 years since the conclusion of the agreement between the Secretariat of the United Nations and the Secretariat of the Council of Europe. The purpose of the agreement is to facilitate cooperation through exchange of information, mutual consultation, attendance at relevant meetings and technical cooperation. The agreement is still valid, even if the two organizations have changed and developed enormously during the past 50 years. The Council of

Europe has become a truly pan-European organization, with one-fourth of the United Nations Member States as members or observers.

Had the agreement been written today, the aims would certainly have been more ambitious. However, what is most important at this stage is to expand the practical framework for cooperative activities and to develop the relationship through pragmatic identification of areas for collaboration. In this way, it will become much easier to undertake a worthwhile review of the agreement at a later stage.

The report to the General Assembly by the United Nations Secretary-General reflects the wide scope of cooperation that has evolved between the two organizations. At United Nations Headquarters, the Council of Europe has many fruitful contacts with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, and there is even more substantial interaction with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. Relations between the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Council are close at both the practical and political levels. At the request of the United Nations Interim Administration in Kosovo, the Council of Europe assumed responsibility for the observation of the municipal electoral process last year, as well as the Assembly elections this year, and the Council has also been active in other fields, such as reforming the judiciary, the protection of minorities, education policies and children and youth programmes.

The Council also enjoys close working relations with the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the High Commissioner for Refugees, as well as with the United Nations Office in Geneva, the Economic Commission for Europe, the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Children's Fund.

It is gratifying to note the Secretary-General's appraisal that the prospects for further enhancement of cooperation are "extremely promising". Stronger bonds will benefit both organizations. There is no doubt that the Council of Europe can contribute substantially to the work of the United Nations in several fields where its expertise is well recognized. In that way, we can achieve less duplication and a more efficient use of resources. Even more importantly, we can enhance the support for our common values, as they are the cornerstones of democratic security.

A central field of increased cooperation is the work to maintain and fortify the international system of norms. This applies to the rule of both national and international law, as well as the development of democracy and human rights.

We should also highlight conflict prevention. Let us make optimal use of common resources to develop conflict prevention strategies and build a more systematic conflict prevention mechanism.

As a regional organization, the Council of Europe has proved that it can make a difference by consolidating democracy, the rule of law and human rights in Europe. Moreover, the Council of Europe has the capability to contribute to global peace-building efforts, as well as to the enhancement of democratic security against the threat of terrorism.

Furthermore, I would like to emphasize the parliamentary dimension of the Council of Europe. The Parliamentary Assembly was the first of its kind to be established in an international organization, and it has developed a lively interaction with the body of Governments of the Council. In this way, the Council of Europe has been able not only to promote constructive cooperation between Governments, but also to foster deep and broad relations between elected representatives of the peoples in the member countries.

Sweden remains deeply committed to both the United Nations and the Council of Europe, and we will continue to work in close partnership with both organizations in addressing the challenges of today and tomorrow.

Mr. Mbanefo (Nigeria): The debate today on the agenda item "Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations" is most auspicious, as it coincides with significant developments on the African continent. Almost six months ago in Lusaka, Zambia, African leaders, at the 37th Ordinary Assembly, took the historic decision to transform the Organization of African Unity (OAU) into the African Union, thus concretizing the long-cherished dream of an independent Africa. That transformation also coincides with the adoption of an African-inspired and designed New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), encapsulating a visionary programme of action that will firmly establish the basis for growth and development and strengthen Africa's capacity to play a more active role in world affairs.

My delegation is therefore grateful to the Secretary-General for his important report contained in document A/56/489 that, inter alia, highlights these important developments and provides insight into the present healthy state of cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union.

The relationship and cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union is consistent with the provisions of the United Nations Charter, which defines and encourages partnerships with other regional organizations, especially in the maintenance of international peace and security. That cooperation has been particularly evident in the past year in the efforts to resolve the conflicts in the African region. The prevalence of these conflicts, notwithstanding, the best efforts of member States of the Union, bespeaks an urgent need to strengthen this cooperation with Africa to find lasting and durable solutions to the conflicts.

It is widely recognized that conflicts in Africa have regional and subregional dimensions. They have resulted in large movements of refugees, with enormous pressure on available infrastructure and scarce resources. Social and economic upheavals, from which vulnerable groups like women, children and the aged have suffered disproportionately, have reinforced political instability, thus undermining well conceived efforts at national development. The need for continued cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union in conflict prevention and peace-building should therefore be emphasized so as to ensure an environment conducive to sustainable development.

It is pertinent to refer here to General Assembly resolution 55/218, which, inter alia, called upon the United Nations Organization to assist the African Union in strengthening the institutional and operational capacity of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, principally in the areas of development of its early warning system, the exchange and coordination of information, technical assistance and training of civilians and military personnel, including staff exchange programmes, logistical support in the area of mine clearance and the mobilization of financial support through the trust funds of the United Nations and the African Union.

We consider the relaunching, by the United Nations in May this year, of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa in Lomé, Togo, as a positive indication of such support. The Centre should be provided the necessary funding to enable it perform its role effectively. We also identify with the efforts of the Secretary-General on mine action, as reflected in the strategy adopted by the Inter-agency Coordination Group on Mine Action last September. We have no doubt that United Nations partnership and cooperation with Africa, which currently has the largest concentration of these mines, would serve the interest of our people.

The constitution of the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on the West African Subregion and the successful completion of its mission in June this year are another significant milestone in the relationship between the Organization and the African continent. The discussions with our leaders, civil society and non-governmental organizations, as well as with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) during the visit, and the recommendations reflected in their report, have provided the United Nations with a proper framework for productive engagement in addressing the challenges of conflict resolution, peace-building and development in the subregion. While confident that the recommendations would be fully implemented, we urge the Secretary-General to compose and send similar missions to other areas in our continent, particularly those experiencing crisis.

The promotion of a culture of peace, tolerance and harmony within and between States is cardinal to the creation of stability and security in Africa. In the past year, the full weight of the African Union's political support has been brought to bear on conflict areas. As a result, confidence and trust have been regenerated among and between groups in such countries as Burundi, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Sierra Leone. This has been done with the active involvement of the United Nations through the Secretary-General's Special Envoys and Special Representatives.

It is recalled that the international community was invited to address its cooperation to the special needs of Africa at the Millennium Summit last September. The specific action programmes contained in the Millennium Declaration can only be successfully implemented in close collaboration with the African Union, whose leaders approved the far-reaching initiatives under the New Partnership for Africa's Development. In this connection, we invite the United

Nations to reinforce support for democracy and governance programmes of NEPAD through effective assistance in capacity-building, particularly in public sector management, administrative and civil service reform and parliamentary oversight. Current extensive cooperation in peacekeeping with Africa should extend to the provision of funds to allow African military officers, particularly those serving with the African Union in subregional arrangements, to participate in training and short exchange programmes.

African leaders have made a solemn undertaking, severally and jointly to bear the responsibility for translating our vision of a new, confident and resurgent Africa into reality. We urge the international community and the United Nations to join Africa in realizing the goals it has set for itself.

Finally, let me address an issue on which United Nations cooperation has proved most invaluable in recent months. I refer to the challenge to combat HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases. When African leaders decided at the African Summit on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and other Related Infectious Diseases, held at Abuja last April, to urgently canvass support and cooperation on the part of the international community, they did so in full appreciation of the profound impact of the spread of the pandemic on every sector of our national lives — our agriculture and food production, education and human resources development and, of course, our anti-poverty elimination programme.

We commend the Secretary-General for his positive engagement with leaders of our region, as well as for his energetic efforts in the search for solutions through the building of a global partnership. His appointment of a Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa, as well as his launching of the Global Fund for AIDS and Health, which has attracted substantial contributions from Governments, the private sector and non-governmental organizations, are an indication of the Organization's commitment to a strong and virile Africa. We note with satisfaction that the United Nations Debt-for-AIDS initiative is assisting African countries to refocus attention to these issues in their planning.

As the institutional framework of the new African Union becomes firmly established, we look forward to further cooperation between Africa and the United Nations. We are confident that such cooperation will continue to be beneficial and enhance Africa's capacity to contribute to the goals of peace, security and development in our world.

Mr. Sun Joun-yung (Republic of Korea): My delegation is pleased to take the floor on agenda item 21, which has clustered 13 different sub-items in accordance with General Assembly resolution 55/285. Although Member States are not yet accustomed to this new modality of joint debate, it is our belief that such clustering will ultimately enhance the efficiency of the Assembly debates and the streamlining of the agendas. Therefore, we sincerely hope that today's debate will proceed smoothly and set a good precedent for the next session of the General Assembly.

My delegation would like to share its views on cooperation between the United Nations and several organizations to which my Government attaches particular importance. First, let me touch upon cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). Since its inception in 1889, the IPU has been successfully fulfilling its role as the focal point for worldwide parliamentary dialogue, living up to the goal elaborated in article 1 of its statute. The IPU has also greatly contributed to the work of the United Nations by bringing a parliamentary dimension and vision to United Nations conferences. In this context, my delegation is very pleased to note that cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU has been further reinforced since the adoption of the cooperation agreement in 1996.

My delegation commends the IPU for actively engaging in virtually every important agenda item of global significance, including international peace and security, economic and social development, international law and human rights issues. As is well illustrated in the Secretary-General's report on cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU (A/56/449), the Union has been making substantial contributions to major United Nations conferences and events by organizing an increasing number of round-table meetings of parliamentarians on issues under discussion or by issuing related documents and reports.

Such cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU is not just mutually beneficial, but also indispensable, as it can help enhance the transparency and accountability of the United Nations to the world public. It is also imperative for translating the commitments made at the United Nations into concrete

action in each Member State. In fact, the IPU could fill the policy gap between the global and national level by urging each parliament to legislate the outcome and recommendations of the United Nations conferences.

Having said that, I would like to echo the Secretary-General's recommendation to grant special status to the IPU, in the light of its unique character as an inter-State body representing 141 parliaments. In this regard, my delegation supports the initiative of the Indian delegation to grant observer status to the IPU. While dismayed by the deferment of a decision on this matter, we look forward to its adoption during the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly. My delegation is pleased to announce that the Republic of Korea has also joined as a sponsor of draft resolution A/56/L.35.

Let me now turn to the cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). My delegation welcomes the adoption of the relationship agreement between the United Nations and the OPCW. We are confident that this arrangement will enhance communication between the two bodies and ensure that the United Nations is kept well informed of the OPCW's activities. Such cooperation is especially critical in today's world, where, as recent events have demonstrated, we are facing a heightened threat of chemical and biological warfare.

Since the establishment of the OPCW in 1997, substantial progress has been made in disarmament in the field of chemical weapons. My delegation commends the steps that have been taken by the organization to bring about the complete destruction of such weapons and to promote the engagement of the chemical industry in this effort.

Obviously, the successful implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) largely depends on the effectiveness of its verification regime. Despite the difficulties encountered by the OPCW in carrying out its verification activities, my delegation is confident that the Organization will achieve its noble goals with the unswerving support of the international community. In this regard, we believe that the conclusion of the relationship agreement between the United Nations and the OPCW will provide added momentum to the effort to strengthen compliance with the CWC and promote universal adherence to the Convention.

As a member of the Executive Council of the OPCW, my Government has contributed to achieving the objectives of the Convention. Among other things, my Government introduced a decision, "Recommendation on ensuring the universality of the Convention" at the Conference of the States Parties to the Convention.

With the conclusion of a relationship agreement between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) this past June, the international community expressed its strong resolve to enhance cooperation between the two bodies. Since then, efforts to do so have had remarkable success, the most recent example of which was the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), held from 11-13 November in New York.

My delegation is pleased to note that there has been substantial progress in terms of establishing the CTBT's verification regime, which comprises the International Monitoring System, International Data Centre, Global Communications Infrastructure and on-site inspections. These measures should provide States parties to the Treaty with the capability to detect nuclear explosions, as well as enable them to make concerted efforts to analyse and address such violations.

While welcoming these developments, we cannot overstate the importance of universalizing the CTBT. The Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT certainly helped mobilize wider political support for this endeavour. In this context, my delegation hopes that the United Nations will play an enhanced role in the effort to achieve universality, thus bringing us closer to a goal shared by the greater part of the international community — the entry into force of the CTBT and the strengthening of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

Last, but not least, let me touch upon the cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

Over the years, the OSCE has assumed a wide range of conflict-prevention and peace-building functions, including preventive diplomacy, post-conflict rehabilitation and humanitarian activities. Much of that work has been carried out in close

cooperation with the United Nations. Recognizing the value of regional arrangements, and the effectiveness of the OSCE in particular, we believe that the role of that organization should be further strengthened.

As a partner for cooperation of the OSCE, the Republic of Korea has made every effort to participate in, and contribute to, the activities of the organization, and will continue to do so. This past March, the Korean Government, together with the OSCE, hosted a conference on the applicability of OSCE confidence- and security-building measures in North-East Asia. Held in Seoul, the conference provided a unique opportunity for the two regions to share best practices and express solidarity.

Likewise, in the Asia-Pacific region, it is encouraging that, since its inception as the region's security cooperation process in 1994, the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum has made much progress in addressing regional security issues. My delegation is of the view that increased cooperation between the United Nations and the ASEAN Regional Forum will serve to enhance the prospects for peace and security not only in the Asia-Pacific region, but also throughout the world. In that context, my delegation will consider in due course the inclusion of an agenda sub-item at the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly on cooperation between the United Nations and the ASEAN Regional Forum, in close consultation with the Forum member States.

Ms. Crowley (Australia): My delegation welcomes the new approach of clustering consideration of the United Nations relations with regional and other international organizations into one agenda item. This is both a better way of considering how multinational organizations work together and a better use of the General Assembly's time. Today we would like to concentrate our remarks on two organizations, the International Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the Pacific Island Forum.

One of the draft resolution before the General Assembly today calls for continued and closer cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU. It recognizes that there is logic in having the two bodies that represent the people of the world able to speak to each other and work together. However, it is necessary to understand that the roles and responsibilities of these two organizations are different and that, while they have much to offer each other, the process of their closer ties needs to be clearly elaborated.

In his remarks to parliamentarians on 4 December, the Secretary-General supported the understanding that the parliamentary voice — the voice of the people — must be an integral component of the work of the United Nations. He pointed out that parliaments are places where the laws of the land are made and where the range of views and beliefs of the community are represented. They are where the legislation that gives effect to United Nations resolutions on all manner of items, including very recent decisions on terrorism as well as further action on issues such as poverty, AIDS and the protection of the environment, is passed.

It is pleasing to note the Secretary-General's strong reminder of the importance of adequate representation of women in the ranks of all parliaments, as well as in the IPU, and the need for legislation to protect their rights and promote their advancement and well-being.

The Secretary-General has recommended further that the IPU be granted observer status in the General Assembly, and that this be a new starting point for building closer cooperation between the two organizations. As a senator for South Australia in the Australian Parliament, I have had the opportunity to attend a number of IPU meetings, both general and women's meetings. One of the things that is very clear is that the IPU does not speak with one voice, nor does it claim to; rather it is a forum where useful debate and deliberation on international issues can be pursued. There have been times in the IPU when passions have run high and what passed for debate has been robust, but it has rarely sunk to name-calling or abuse. This somewhat more volatile or fiery debate clearly distinguishes parliamentarians from delegates to the United Nations. Indeed, perhaps the United Nations could benefit from a little spice from parliamentarians, and parliamentarians could benefit from the mannerliness of United Nations representatives. Most IPU debates, though, have resulted in sensible and balanced communiqués.

Australia has long been a participant in the IPU, with a group of parliamentarians from both the House and the Senate attending meetings. The group does not represent the Australian Parliament, nor does it represent the Government or the opposition. Each

person goes as an individual. Usually the group arrives at an agreed position on the issues under discussion. However, it is clear that the IPU, like the Australian delegation to the IPU, does not speak with one voice, so there are consequences for any role that the IPU would play once it attained observer status in the General Assembly.

One issue that I and many other women have pursued has been the outcomes of our meetings. It is a matter of pride for the IPU that it is, what I call, the mother of the world atlas about the numbers of women in parliaments around the world. The IPU's atlas initiative was a consequence of requests for follow-up after IPU meetings. It an excellent example of the sort of thing that the IPU could offer the United Nations in its closer arrangement.

There is scope for other inventories to be produced. Take, for example, the debate that the IPU had about the protection of children — a very useful deliberation on a most worthwhile topic. As a follow-up, the IPU could send a form to every participating parliament, as they did in the case of women in parliament, seeking information about whether that parliament had legislation covering this question. The results could be published simply as a yes/no list for the information of participants and the wider community. The same could be done for a number of different topics.

It would be necessary to ensure that such productions were complementary to the output of the United Nations and that duplication was avoided. It would also help the United Nations address important questions of accountability — more and more important in times of tight fiscal restraint and when there are increasing numbers of people around the world who want to know about the outcomes and the follow-up to important conferences, debates and agreements.

While Australia has argued in the past in favour of retaining and strengthening the links between the IPU and the United Nations, and indeed reinforces that position today, nevertheless, it is important to examine exactly how those links would be developed. There is a need to be clear about costs involved, and any increase in cost to one or other organization has to be documented and agreed before any progress can happen. The IPU is confronting difficulties with regard to costs, and that is an issue that — as Australia has made clear in the past — it cannot support while doubt remains as to the ongoing ability of the organization to meet those costs.

Many parliaments operate under the principle of the separation of powers, that is, that the parliament is distinct from the executive Government, and it has a watch-dog role in keeping the Government accountable, especially in expenditure but also in the legislation that is passed. Such a distinction does not easily fit the IPU and the United Nations. Certainly, the IPU represents parliamentarians but, as has already been pointed out, the IPU does not speak with one voice. Accountability in the United Nations is to, and by, the Member States who constitute the United Nations. The continuing relationship between these two organizations will need further deliberation and definition as the draft resolution allows.

There is no doubt that anything that enables or encourages parliamentarians to reflect the ideals of the United Nations in their parliaments is only to the good. It may have been possible to argue in the past that the issues of the United Nations were not relevant to any particular country, but it is now beyond dispute that more and more of the issues raised in parliaments are of international dimension and concern. Many of the draft resolutions under discussion at this session of the General Assembly are cases in point, for example those relating to fisheries and the law of the sea, the environment, pollution of air and water and the very immediate question of terrorism. The same international focus is necessary for issues of trade, finance, markets for goods and services, wage parity and justice and human rights.

Here we are today at a place in history where the relationship between the United Nations and the IPU is taking a significant step closer. The peoples of the world we all claim to represent want a voice that is heard and decisions that improve their lives. Closer ties will help to ensure that we parliamentarians continue to reflect the ideals of the United Nations in our parliaments and the wishes of the people in the United Nations.

In closing, we would like to comment briefly on the potential for expanded cooperation between the United Nations and other organizations, including regional ones such as the Pacific Islands Forum. We are pleased to associate ourselves with the statement made this morning by the representative of Nauru on behalf

of the Pacific Islands Forum. We believe that constructive partnership between the United Nations and the Forum can enhance the Forum's own efforts to address regional security challenges, for example implementation of the Biketawa Declaration. Consultation between the Forum and the United Nations can also help more vulnerable island economies deal with the challenges and opportunities of globalization.

Mr. Koonjul (Mauritius): The importance of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in the implementation of the principles and the fulfilment of the purposes of the United Nations Charter as well as in the promotion of the social and economic development of peoples can never be overemphasized. The Charter of the United Nations makes special provisions for such cooperation. Without regional organizations, the task of the United Nations in achieving its objectives would be extremely difficult. While we favour strengthening cooperation with all regional organizations, including the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), we would like to focus on United Nations cooperation with two organizations, namely the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the International Organization of la Francophonie, of which we are a member. In that regard, allow me to associate my delegation with the statement made by the representative of Zambia on behalf of the OAU.

We note with satisfaction that the United Nations and its specialized agencies have continued to implement and expand the agreed programme of cooperation with the OAU. That cooperation, which dates back to 1965, has grown steadily over time. Today, the need for the United Nations to work closely with the OAU is even stronger, at a time when the pan-African organization is in a transitional phase leading to its transformation into the African Union. My delegation calls upon the United Nations and its agencies to support the OAU transition and programmes aimed at the operationalization of the African Union.

The report of the Secretary-General (A/56/489) clearly emphasizes the need for ongoing cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU in the areas of conflict prevention, peace and security, humanitarian issues and public information. The OAU has long been engaged in activities to advance the cause of peace and development in Africa. Its Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution was set up specifically to deal with conflicts in Africa. The OAU is making a positive contribution in the search for solutions to conflicts in Angola, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone and Ethiopia and Eritrea, among others. Those conflict situations also figure prominently on the United Nations agenda. It is therefore vital that there should be close coordination and cooperation between the two organization; Mauritius indeed welcomes the ongoing collaboration between the United Nations and the OAU.

As an African continental organization, the OAU can play an extremely important role in preventing conflicts and in contributing to the resolution of those conflicts in close cooperation with the United Nations. It is, however, important that the OAU be equipped with the necessary facilities to be able effectively and promptly to address conflict situations. One of the areas where the United Nations could help the OAU is that of improving its early warning system. More frequent consultations between the United Nations and the OAU would also lead to concerted action in the settlement of conflicts.

The events of 11 September call for even greater cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU in the fight against terrorism. Nobody and no country is immune to acts of terrorism, and the eradication of terrorism requires concerted efforts. By 1999, the leaders of Africa, meeting at Algiers, Algeria, for their annual summit, had adopted the OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism. The 11 September attacks, which shocked the whole world and which led to the adoption of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), increased the obligation of all Member States to take effective action against terrorism. In that respect, the OAU can play an important role in coordinating the efforts and in identifying and addressing the needs of African countries for the proper implementation of resolutions against terrorism.

On the economic front, the OAU and Africa have been very active in facing the challenges of globalization. In its struggle to emerge from a low level of development, the OAU adopted the Cairo Plan of Action, which was followed by the Abuja Treaty establishing the African Economic Community. More recently, the OAU adopted the New African Initiative, now called the New Partnership for Africa's Development. Moreover, the United Nations

Millennium Declaration contains an entire section devoted to the specific needs of Africa. Given the readiness of Africa to shoulder its share of responsibility, and given the commitment of the United Nations, through the Millennium Declaration, to help Africa to become integrated into the world economy, my delegation hopes that the United Nations will closely involve the OAU in the implementation of the Declaration, especially its provisions that relate to meeting the special needs of Africa.

(*spoke in French*)

I note with satisfaction that in his report (A/56/390) on cooperation between the United Nations and the International Organization of la Francophonie (OIF), the Secretary-General speaks of strengthening that cooperation. Complementarity is essential, because in the agreement between the United Nations and the OIF of 25 June 1997 political issues constitute one of the principal areas of cooperation. For example the contribution of the OIF to the settlement of the conflict in Burundi clearly demonstrates that regional organizations can play an important role in conflict settlement.

Organizations should establish partnerships in the search for solutions to national and regional political problems. Here, the Secretary-General rightly takes note of the joint efforts of the OAU and the OIF to foster peace and reconciliation in the Comoros. Let me add that I myself was closely involved, under OAU auspices, in the efforts to restore stability to the Comoros, so I am in a position to speak of the extremely positive outcome of that joint endeavour.

While it is important to find joint solutions to political problems, development must continue to be the priority area for cooperation between these organizations and the United Nations.

The joint use of capacities for development and the strengthening of cooperation in the economic, social and cultural spheres should be encouraged. We therefore welcome the cooperation agreements signed between the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and the OIF to provide technical and financial support aimed at promoting the status and role of African women.

Regional organizations rely heavily on cooperation with the United Nations, and Mauritius notes with satisfaction that some have decided to invest in the functioning of the universal Organization. In document A/56/390, the Secretary-General indicates that, pursuant to an agreement signed in 1999 with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the OIF is currently funding over 20 experts, all from developing countries, assigned to United Nations activities. The partnership between the United Nations and the OIF, which covers an increasing number of areas of activity in which the two organizations have joint interests, is only one among many examples of the success of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations.

The delegation of Mauritius fully supports efforts further to strengthen such links. We hope that this fruitful relationship will develop even more in coming years. My delegation is therefore pleased to support the draft resolutions on cooperation between the United Nations and the regional organizations.

Mr. Aliyev (Azerbaijan): I am speaking in reference to sub-item (c) of agenda item 21.

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe is long-standing. However, since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 55/3, interaction between the two organizations has continued to improve. Both organizations continue to have shared interests which lend themselves to cooperation in such areas as conflict prevention, post-conflict peace-building and confidence-building measures aimed at increasing tolerance and understanding between people belonging to different ethnic groups.

In this context, we note with appreciation the report of the Secretary-General in document A/56/302, which adequately reflects the fruitful cooperation between the two organizations and aims at exploring possibilities for the further enhancement of cooperation, information exchange and coordination between the United Nations and the Council of Europe.

It is highly commendable that the Council of Europe actively and productively cooperates with the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo and the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia. We also note the close cooperation between the Council of Europe and the United Nations Office at Geneva, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and others.

In this context, I would like to mention a parliamentary meeting on refugees and displaced persons in the South Caucasus, organized by the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Demography of the Council's Parliamentary Assembly, in cooperation with the Parliament of Azerbaijan in May 2001. Its purpose was to assess how far the humanitarian needs of the refugees and displaced persons in the region were being met and what progress was being made in implementing solutions and defining ways of improving the situation. During this meeting, the UNDP Resident Coordinator in Azerbaijan made a presentation on UNDP action in the South Caucasus States, focusing on strategies for promoting returns, integration and resettlement, as well as on current projects, new approaches and remaining obstacles.

Since the establishment in 1996 of UNHCR's Liaison Office to the European institutions in Strasbourg, its cooperation with the Council of Europe has developed into a comprehensive partnership focusing on the development of legal standards, the raising of awareness regarding human rights and the strengthening of civil societies as they relate to persons of concern to UNHCR. The relationship between the Council and UNHCR has evolved significantly, as the Council's unique pan-European membership coincides with the increased operational involvement of UNHCR in the problems of refugees and displaced populations of Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe.

UNHCR and the Council are implementing a joint programme of technical assistance in a number of member States. This consists of co-organizing and conducting workshops on a variety of thematic issues of relevance to both organizations. For example, such a workshop will be held in my country on the implementation of legislation regarding non-governmental organizations and on the implementation of citizenship law.

January 2002 will mark the first year of Azerbaijan's accession to the Council of Europe. We consider our accession to the Council to be the beginning of a new stage of the development of Azerbaijan as an equal member of the European family. The accession of the country, which is located on an historic crossroads, to the Council of Europe is beneficial both for Azerbaijan and for the Council of Europe. We do our best to make our contributions to European values. These contributions will help to strengthen democratic stability in Europe and help Europeans to understand better and more thoroughly the historical destinies of oriental nations.

The strengthening of democracy is one of the priorities and is to be one of the main objectives of cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe. Azerbaijan pays great attention to the development of democracy in our region. We believe that it will serve as a guarantee for regional security and stability. We also believe that democracy cannot be developed in a society inflamed by the ideology of aggressive nationalism, national superiority and territorial claims on neighbouring States.

Today, conflicts are being incited, the territories of sovereign States are being occupied, ethnic cleansing is being conducted and a peaceful population is being expelled from its homes. Conciliation with aggression, the recognition of the results of illegal actions and the lack of a timely, adequate reaction from the international community have tragic consequences, undermine the foundations of sovereign States and cause humanitarian disasters. There should be no double standards. This area is indivisible and all conflicts need an equally serious and principled approach.

The Council of Europe, on its part, adopts a commendable and consistent approach. In dealing with the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, at its 108th session adopted the Final Communiqué reaffirming

> "respect for internationally recognised borders, sovereignty and territorial integrity of States throughout Europe, as well as for the other principles of international law set out in the United Nations Charter, the CSCE Helsinki Final Act and other relevant texts".

On 19 September 2001, the Committee adopted a decision which stated that

> "the right to self-determination should be respected, in conformity with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and with norms of international law, including those relating to territorial integrity of states. Consequently, this right may only be exercised following peaceful negotiations. Use of force for the purpose of acquiring territory is unacceptable

and any resultant acquisition cannot be recognised as lawful"

Through the promotion of democratic stability, the protection of human rights and the monitoring of its member States' commitments, the Council of Europe makes a substantial contribution to the activities of the United Nations by rendering its high-level of expertise.

As one of the sponsors of the draft resolution, our delegation expresses its confidence that it will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Naidu (Fiji): Fiji fully endorses the Pacific Islands Forum statement delivered earlier by Mr. Vinci Clodumar of Nauru.

In congratulating the Forum earlier this year on its thirtieth anniversary, former Fiji statesman and elder Pacific leader, Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, announced that the Forum has become a potent factor in advancing the name and needs of the South Pacific. As one of the Forum's creators, Ratu Mara identified cooperation and leadership as critical assets for a self assured future for the region.

Today, therefore, we take great pride and joy in the milestone in the history of the Forum region that will be marked with the adoption of draft resolution A/56/L.29, ushering in a new era of cooperation between the Pacific Islands Forum and the United Nations.

The island States members of the Pacific Forum were born with their own political culture, each essentially subscribing to the "Pacific way". As it evolved over three decades, the "Pacific way" has braced our members, collectively and individually, helping us to emerge from a more rigid and politically prohibitive colonial culture to independence. In that process, and grappling with the myriad challenges then and now, our members have also shifted from the culture of dependency — a legacy of our colonial past — to greater economic independence.

We increasingly appreciate the value of, and the need for, a proactive policy over the reactive stances held traditionally. Much of the latter is attributed to the peculiarities and vulnerabilities that we face by virtue of being small island developing States, and exacerbated by our remote isolation. The lessons of the past have also built our resolve to be strengthened by these unique constraints and to determine our future directions and strategies that will keep us afloat in the face of the momentous challenges ahead.

We recognize that effective leadership and cooperation are critical assets for Forum members today as we engage in globalization, a global development reality that we neither dictate nor control but whose encompassing rules and framework we are drawn into as a matter of course. While we have developed our regional structure over the past 30 years, and have learned many lessons on the way, we recognize that the full benefits of membership for individual Forum members in this international family can only be optimally realized through a regional approach.

Granting observer status to the Forum Secretariat has merits. Yet actual cooperation evaded us and entailed greater burdens, again to be carried by the individual member States. Our visions in the Pacific Forum region duplicate the very goals and objectives of the Organization. Logistically, and therefore logically, cooperation would greatly enhance our strategies to achieve these goals with better-focused coordination to avoid duplication and unnecessary waste, which we can ill-afford.

It is high time to forge such closer cooperation — especially with regional groups and organizations whose members are predominantly from developing and least developed countries — in order to leverage our positions and give us greater voice and equitable representation and better recognition of our assessed needs and consequent demands which, on close scrutiny, are well within the scope of the various mandates of the United Nations. We have just typically been slow to utilize the available facilities and mechanisms, unless championed by bigger developed partners. This event promises to augment the strengths and benefits of existing bilateral and multilateral arrangements for our members. Conversely, we are confident that it will mitigate actual or potential adverse effects on our political and economic sustainability.

Fiji and its sister Pacific nations therefore have great hopes that, by forging closer cooperation between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum, we can stand taller, and together make enduring strides for our peoples in our mutually beneficial organizational goals.

Mr. Šimonović (Croatia): The Millennium Declaration goal of strengthening the United Nations as a forum for dialogue and effective action in order to cope with the challenges of this millennium, which includes better cooperation between the United Nations and other multilateral bodies and regional organizations. This idea is only briefly mentioned in the Secretary-General's road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration, and it is the hope of my delegation that our deliberations today will provide valuable contributions to this end.

As we decided this year to examine the cooperation between the United Nations and several regional organizations under one agenda item, my delegation will concentrate its contribution on the cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe, and between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

The United Nations and the Council of Europe, as well as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, have shared interests on the European continent to promote and strengthen democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms and the rule of law, and to contribute to conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building.

The practice of tripartite high-level meetings between the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Council of Europe is a prime example of cooperation and coordination of activities in areas of common concern that is already functioning.

An assessment of the role played by the OSCE points to the significant benefits that could be derived from collaboration between the various peacekeeping missions, programmes and agencies of the United Nations and the OSCE missions in various areas.

In the course of the last 26 years, the OSCE has evolved into a respectable regional organization capable of handling different challenges that pose threats to peace and security in Europe. Many of the lessons regarding that process have been learned in close cooperation with the United Nations, working side by side to try to bring peace and stability to different parts of the European continent. It is evident from the Secretary-General's report that the OSCE is making an important and positive contribution to regional and, by extension, global peace and security.

South-Eastern Europe has been a successful testing ground for a number of OSCE actions and new approaches — such as police training, democratization projects, institution-building, election organization and monitoring, and field presence.

Speaking on the basis of my country's experience, cooperation with the OSCE and its mission in Croatia has been very valuable. We shall continue our constructive dialogue with the mission so as to maximize its potential, bearing in mind the numerous positive changes in my country. Croatia believes that the continuation of positive developments will soon bring an end to the need for further OSCE presence in the current form.

Europe may be proud of its machinery and institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights, yet of course more can, and should, still be done. The Council of Europe remains the leading regional organization in the field of the promotion and protection of human rights in both the standard-setting and the implementation dimensions. On the other hand, the European Convention on Human Rights provides for the possibility of recourse to the European Court of Human Rights. The rich jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights is providing relevant case law. The role of the OSCE in strengthening the common security and political framework guided by human rights principles is a remarkable achievement.

Recently, on 6 November, Croatia marked in its Parliament, the Sabor, the fifth anniversary of its membership in the Council of Europe, with Lord Russell-Johnston, President of the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly attending. Croatia's membership in the Council of Europe was of special importance to further strengthening the rule of law and protecting human rights. In general, the Croatian legal system has greatly benefited from an overall legal reform in which national human rights law has been based upon United Nations and European standards in this field. Croatian courts have begun to invoke in their decisions articles from international treaties in the field of human rights, as well as judgements of the European Court of Human Rights.

Turning to our neighbour Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Croatia welcomes the close cooperation between the United Nations Mission

in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Council of Europe, and shares the opinion of the Secretary-General's Special Representative on the need for its speedy accession to the Council of Europe. The Republic of Croatia believes that Bosnia and Herzegovina's membership in the Council of Europe would encourage good governance and have a very positive impact on further democratic development and the protection of human rights.

The cooperation between the three organizations could be enhanced in a number of ways, taking into consideration the mandate and primary role of each of them, as well as their specific expertise. For example, the Council of Europe could significantly contribute to the activities of the United Nations in the field of the promotion and protection of human rights through legal reforms, including the very important area of local and regional democracy, which does not have a counterpart in the activities of the United Nations system.

One of the key issues in re-thinking the role of regional organizations in the changing world continues to be the possible timely division of activities between the United Nations as the universal Organization, on the one hand, and relevant regional organizations, on the other. Close cooperation and a clear division of labour and responsibilities are indispensable in order to avoid the risk of unnecessarily duplicating existing efforts and mechanisms.

The International Conference on Human Rights and Democratization in Europe, Central Asia and the Caucasus was held recently in Dubrovnik, Croatia, from 8 to 10 October. My delegation has distributed the Dubrovnik Conclusions under this agenda item as an example of good cooperation between the United Nations and other organizations — more precisely, between the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and its Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and the European Commission.

The scope of that Conference was to review the follow-up to some aspects of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, and more specifically with reference to the democratization and development of civil society and multiculturalism. High Commissioner Mary Robinson, in her opening speech in Dubrovnik, presented her ideas in a draft framework for regional cooperation, which placed particular emphasis on the following areas: national plans of action, national human rights institutions, human rights education and follow-up to recommendations by treaty bodies and mechanisms of the Commission on Human Rights.

It is the hope of my Government that the Dubrovnik Conference and Dubrovnik Conclusions will be the beginning of a process of enhanced cooperation between the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Council of Europe, the European Union and the OSCE in the field of human rights and democratization, aimed at making activities more effective, avoiding unnecessary duplication and identifying opportunities for cooperation.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.